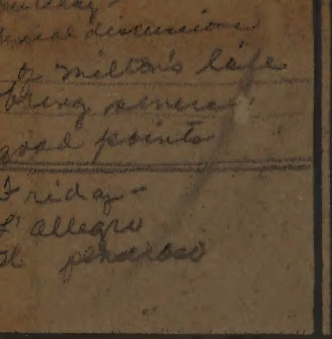

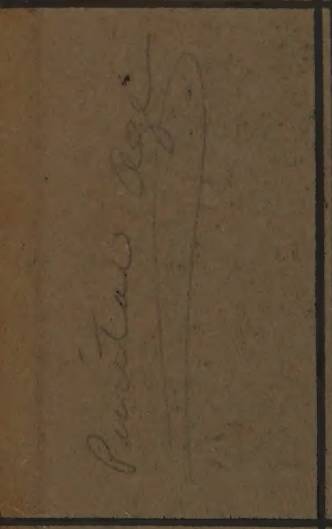

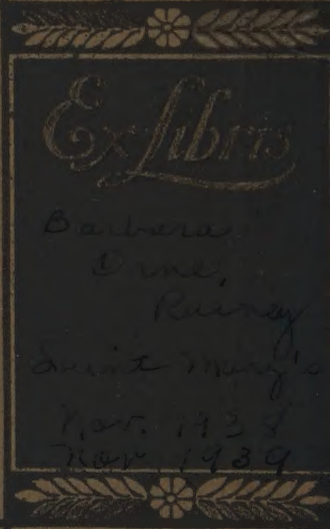
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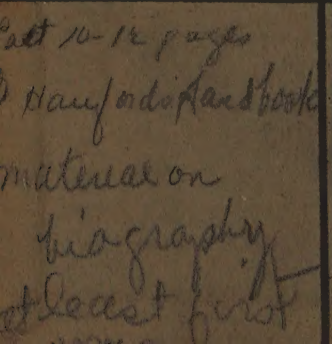

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Read
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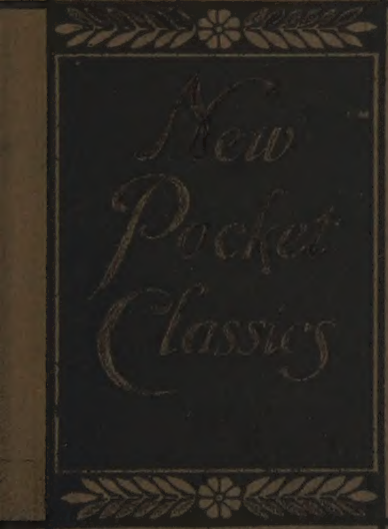

Milton Book Portions
Milton, Areopagitica -
Samuel Samuel

to Bristol

Sabrina rises, attended by water nymphs

MINOR POEMS

John Milton

Edited by S. E. Allen
Revised by H. Y. Moffett
Illustrated by W. M. Berger

The Macmillan Company

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PREFACE

THIS edition of Milton's *Minor Poems* contains several selections not in the college entrance requirements. The teacher should encourage his pupils to read them, as well as others not given here. All the poems should be read once or twice without reference to the notes, and simply for the sake of understanding them in general and enjoying them. The Lady Alice was fourteen when she acted her part in "Comus"; her brothers were younger; and they had no annotated edition.

I have attempted to furnish all the historical, biographical, and critical material necessary for an understanding of the poems, but not to usurp the place of the teacher. He will, it is very likely, omit parts of the material here presented and amplify others. I have made no attempt at appreciation or at such subjects as an examination of Milton's vocabulary—for example, his double epithets. These the teacher will bring out in the classroom. A discussion of them may well accompany the reading aloud of the poems. Such a reading will help the pupil not only to appreciate these poems, but to use his own language more artistically and intelligently. In places the notes are somewhat dogmatic. If two or more explanations of a difficult passage are equally probable and satisfactory, one gains little and loses much by putting them all before the young student. The teacher will as a matter of course consult various editions and get the opinions of all the authorities.

Good histories of the period in which Milton lived are Green's *History of the English People* (*Macmillan*), and Gardiner's *The Puritan Revolution* (Longmans). The shorter histories by the same authors will satisfy those pressed for time. The authoritative biography of Milton is, of course, Professor Masson's *Life of Milton: narrated in connexion with the Political, Ecclesiastical, and Literary History of his Time* (six volumes, Macmillan). Briefer biographies are *John Milton* by Professor W. P. Trent (Macmillan); *John Milton*, by Mark Pattison, in the English Men of Letters (Macmillan); *Milton*, by Dr. Richard Garnett, in the Great Writers Series (Walter Scott); and *Milton*, by Stopford A. Brooke, in Classical Writers (D. Appleton). *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, Vol. VII, contains an interesting account of Milton, but inaccurate in details. This and Dr. Garnett's biography furnish good bibliographies.

S. E. A.

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INTRODUCTION

Historical Background

To understand the life of Milton and to appreciate his writings one must know something of the history of England during the first sixty years of the seventeenth century. Each one of his poems reflects either the ecclesiastical or the political history of the particular time in which it was written. From "L'Allegro" to "Lycidas" the careful reader can trace the evolution of Milton from a high-minded Elizabethan, enjoying all the legitimate pleasures of an Elizabethan, to a stern Puritan, thundering condemnation of the corrupt clergy of the Established Church.

Between Milton's birth in 1608 and the execution of Charles I in 1649 two struggles combined to agitate England. The first was ecclesiastical; the second political. These struggles did not originate during the life of Milton; the seeds of them had been sown long before. During the reign of Mary (1553-1558) many persecuted Protestants fled to the continent. There they learned the discipline and doctrines of Calvinism, among them the stern theory of predestination. The form of worship which they had adopted emphasized the intellectual side of religion to the exclusion of the emotional. To the intellect, the surplice, kneeling and bowing in devotion, stained glass windows—ceremony and form in general—make but a weak appeal. Their appeal is to the emotions. To the Calvinist they

were besides objectionable because they were used in the Church of Rome. With the abatement of persecution at the accession of Elizabeth, many of these Protestants returned from the continent, bringing with them their newly-acquired hatred of the ceremonial of the Church of England. Furthermore, they objected to bishops and archbishops, as savoring of Popery. But as late as 1603 only a tenth, or thereabouts, of the members of the Established Church objected to the accustomed ritual and government.

There were thus within the National Church two fairly distinct bodies. The minority wished to bring the Church into harmony with Calvin's system, a system similar to that of the Presbyterian Church as we know it. The majority, however, was content to observe the ceremonies of the Church as they had been observed in the reign of Elizabeth. Outside the Church were the Roman Catholics and the Protestant non-conformists or Separatists. Of these last were the first settlers of New England. They believed the Church to be hopelessly corrupt. In his youth and young manhood Milton, like his father, belonged to the Established Church. Later he favored successively the Presbyterians, and the Separatists or Independents. Both Roman Catholics and Separatists, as the needs of the government demanded, were persecuted during the reign of Elizabeth. For example, the Catholics suffered in 1588 when the Spanish invasion was threatening. Elizabeth was opposed to the Calvinists, too, and mainly for political reasons. Through the bishops of the Church of England, who were appointed by the Crown, she could control the clergy and thus rule the Church. A

Presbyterian church, being practically a democracy, would be a menace to her power.

The second struggle mentioned above was between the people and the sovereign, or, more strictly speaking, between the Parliament and the sovereign. Under the Tudors Parliament was weak. Even in the reign of Elizabeth, however, there were signs of the coming struggle. But Elizabeth ruled too wisely, responded too promptly to the demands of her people, to let it become formidable. At her death England was still a unit; she had for the most part reigned in "harmony with popular sentiment."

When James I came to the throne of England in 1603, he had immediately to consider the religious question. About eight hundred Puritan clergymen petitioned him for reforms within the Church. They wished him to forbid clergymen to hold appointments in two or more parishes, accept the salaries themselves, and appoint vicars at small stipends to do the work. They criticised many of the clergy as inefficient in that they could not or did not preach. And they asked for liberty. Each clergyman, they thought, should decide for himself whether or not he would wear a surplice and observe the prescribed forms. Their principal demands James scornfully rejected. And about three hundred clergymen who refused to conform were ejected from their livings. But as the Puritans were at this time comparatively few, they did not, seemingly at least, menace the throne. Furthermore, the appointment of Abbott as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1610 quieted many of the reformers. He was lax in discipline, and winked at Puritan deviations from the forms of the Church.

James had trouble also with the Roman Catholics. Early in his reign he remitted fines on Roman

Catholic "recusants," those Catholics who refused to attend the services of the Established Church. The result was a very large increase in the number of recusants. Alarmed, James banished Roman Catholic priests from London. This incited a Catholic plot, known as the Gunpowder Plot, to blow up the Parliament building and kill the members of Parliament as well as the King. The discovery of the plot led to violent persecution of the Church blamed for it. Meanwhile James had quarrelled with his Parliaments. Because he had a family, he needed more money than Elizabeth had needed. But his first Parliament, dissatisfied with his treatment of the Puritans and with the favors he showered on the Scotchmen who had followed him to England, disregarded his wants. Not being granted sufficient revenues by Parliament, James on his own authority levied duties on imports. He bargained with the Parliament concerning the surrender of the right he claimed to levy these duties, quarrelled with it on various subjects, and in 1611 dissolved it in anger, leaving the vexatious questions unsettled. As the reign of James began, so it continued and ended. He opposed a growing body of Puritans in the Church; he spent more than his income, raised money in ways not approved by his Parliaments, and consequently quarrelled with them. Therefore at his death in 1625 he left to his son Charles I a kingdom torn by dissensions.

Charles lacked energy and capacity. He had not the tact and charity and love for his people necessary to reunite the nation. Like his father, he believed in the divine right of kings; he was obstinate in his adherence to his policies; he was not to be trusted; he made promises with no idea of keeping them. His first Parliament refused to

vote sufficient money for him unless he would give up his leading adviser, Buckingham, and would select counsellors that it could trust. Charles had inherited with additions the distrust which the nation had conceived for his father. It suspected that Charles, because he had married the French Princess Henrietta Maria, who was a Roman Catholic, would favor the Catholics. Charles, however, was willing to persecute the Catholics, but not to allow Parliament a voice in the selection of his counsellors. In other words, he was not willing that Parliament rather than King should govern England. In the hope that a new Parliament would be more complaisant, he dissolved the first. But the second Parliament proceeded at once to impeach Buckingham, and was soon dissolved. Then for about two years (1626-1628) Charles ruled without a Parliament. He raised money by forced loans and by other means which to most Englishmen seemed illegal. Five knights who refused to pay the forced loan were imprisoned.

With the third Parliament which met in 1638 Charles had more trouble than with the first two, and in 1639 he dissolved it. For the next eleven years England with no Parliament had an experience of personal government. Charles ruled by means of the Star Chamber, a court which was merely an instrument for enforcing his will. He levied taxes without a Parliamentary grant, and thus goaded his people to desperation, for illegal taxation has always been to an Englishman the most irritating kind of tyranny. John Hampden, by refusing to pay a tax called ship-money, made himself a popular hero. The breach between King and people widened rapidly.

The religious quarrel continually increased in

bitterness. Theology agitated all England. Before the death of James, many of the clergy and of the laity had accepted the doctrines of Arminianism, which opposed Calvinism at many points, especially with reference to predestination. James, who was a Calvinist, had opposed the new doctrine, but Charles favored Arminianism. And his first Parliament impeached his Chaplain, Montague, for holding that doctrine. In 1628 Charles forbade any one to speak in public on the disputed points. This of course caused dissatisfaction. In all matters relating to the Church Charles followed the advice of William Laud, who became in 1633 Archbishop of Canterbury. Laud was a narrow-minded but exceedingly energetic man. He aimed to do only a few things, and he did them thoroughly. "I laboured nothing more," he said, "than that the external public worship of God—too much slighted in most parts of the Kingdom—might be preserved, and that with as much decency and uniformity as might be." His motto was, "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." He wished to make the Church and the Church service as beautiful as possible and the service uniform throughout England. To the Puritan he seemed to be drawing the English Church back to Romanism, "the grim wolf with privy paw." Probably Laud did more than any other person to bring about the Civil War. In 1637 the Bishops of the Scottish Church, acting in part at least under Laud's advice, attempted to force upon that Church a prayer-book much like the English Book of Common Prayer, but more objectionable to the Puritans. The result was a riot in Edinburgh, and the abolition of Episcopacy in Scotland by an assembly acting independently of Charles.

Unable himself to put down what was practically rebellion in Scotland, Charles in 1640 called two Parliaments, the second of which met in November. This is known as the Long Parliament. It sent Laud to the Tower, and beheaded Strafford, who had shared with Laud the position of Charles's chief adviser. It passed bills which made impossible government by the King without Parliament. Had Charles been content to be merely a constitutional monarch, the Civil War would probably never have taken place. But fresh quarrels with Parliament soon occurred. In 1642 Charles entered the House of Commons to arrest five members. This breach of the privileges of Parliament brought to a head the troubles which had been agitating England for many years. In the war which followed between King and Parliament, a war which was caused partly by political questions and partly by religious, Charles was defeated. In 1649 he was beheaded.

After the execution of the monarch, the House of Commons announced that England had become a Commonwealth "without King or House of Lords," that is, it had become a kind of republic. The Commonwealth, however, never had the support of the people of England, and could not have stood a month without the backing of the army, and especially of Cromwell, the head of the army. He put down with a savage hand Royalist uprisings in Ireland and in Scotland, and showed himself in all ways masterful. But in 1653 the Parliament acted contrary to his plans, and he dissolved it. He and his officers then assembled a Parliament, called Barebone's Parliament after Praise-God Barebone, one of its members. This body wished to rule England in accordance with the will of God, but no two of the members agreed

as to what that will was. In a few months it was dissolved, and Cromwell became Lord Protector of England, with all the powers of a king. Abroad he waged successful war and gained the respect of the world; at home his government was a failure. During his Protectorate he called two Parliaments, and found them both unsatisfactory. His ideas were far in advance of his age. Discontent grew rapidly. But in September, 1658, death released him from his troubles. For a few months his son Richard succeeded him; the great majority of Englishmen, however, had concluded that the only way to turn back the rising tide of anarchy was to recall the House of Stuart to the throne. On May 29, 1660, Charles II entered London, while practically all England shouted, "Welcome now, great Monarch, to your own."

LIFE OF MILTON

The life and literary career of John Milton fall naturally into three periods. The first, which we may call the period of his education, extends to his return from the continent in 1639. In it he wrote the most important of his shorter poems. In the second, which ends in 1660, he wrote almost no poetry. He was for about ten years an officer of the English government; during the entire period he was busy writing arguments in prose, both Latin and English. From this fact it is often called his prose period. In the third, which ends at his death, in 1674, he wrote *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*.

1608-1639. John Milton was born in London on the ninth of December, 1608. His father was John Milton, a scrivener, whose office and residence was

in Bread Street at the sign of the Spread Eagle. A scrivener drew up deeds, contracts, and other documents of the same kind, and lent money on commission. The poet's grandfather had in the reign of Elizabeth been fined as a Roman Catholic recusant. The poet's father was disowned when he joined the Church of England. These facts help one to understand the keen interest which Milton always felt in religious questions. Milton, the scrivener, prospered in business, and the youth of the poet seems to have been unusually happy. The scrivener was a skilful musician, a composer of considerable reputation, and even tried his hand at poetry. Milton's Latin poem "Ad Patrem" is a tribute to his father's learning and generosity. It is only one of many proofs that the father had a wonderful influence on his gifted son. Of the mother little is known except that she was distinguished "by the esteem in which she was held and the alms which she bestowed." Milton's brother Richard studied law, turned Roman Catholic, and was knighted by James II. In spite of their different opinions in politics and religion, the brothers maintained the most pleasant of relations. Anne, Milton's only sister, became Mrs. Phillips, and by a second marriage Mrs. Agar. Her two sons by her first husband were taught by Milton after his return from the continent; one of them is numbered among his earliest biographers. The home of the Miltons, though Puritan, was not devoid of the ordinary pleasures. It had the culture of the Elizabethan home of the better class, with the best characteristics of Puritanism.

It helps one to an understanding of Milton's writings to remember that he was eight years old at the death of Shakespeare. He may even have

seen the great dramatist on the street, for the famous Mermaid Tavern frequented by Shakespeare and his friends was on Bread Street. Milton was seventeen at the death of Bacon; twenty-seven at the death of Ben Jonson. The great poet of Puritanism lived, therefore, before the Elizabethan spirit had waned; he was touched by the intensity and largeness of life in the Elizabethan era. "L'Allegro" is evidence of that.

His father provided liberally for his education; and the boy proved himself worthy of his father's liberality. "My appetite for knowledge was," he says, "so voracious, that, from twelve years of age, I hardly ever left my studies, or went to bed before midnight." Thus began the injury to his eyes which resulted in his blindness. He studied first under a Presbyterian clergyman, Thomas Young, whom he always respected and admired, and later in St. Paul's School under Alexander Gill. He read the Latin and Greek authors necessary for entrance to the university, and ranged at will through the English writers. His critics have detected in his works the influence of Chaucer, Spenser, Drayton, Drummond of Hawthornden, Tasso in Fairfax's translation, and Sylvester in the translation of Du Bartas.

Two influences in Milton's life at St. Paul's School are deserving of mention. Here began his friendship with the half-Italian Charles Diodati, which continued unabated till the untimely death of Diodati in 1638. Milton's other close friend in the school was Alexander Gill the younger, who held the position of usher. Something of a poet himself, he had considerable influence on the literary efforts of his pupil.

Milton entered Christ's College, Cambridge University in 1625; he received the B.A. degree in

1629 and the M.A. in 1632. He thus spent seven years in the university. His life there was not particularly happy. Soon after his entrance a disagreement with his tutor Chappell led to his enforced absence from college. As on his return he was assigned to a different tutor and did not lose credit for a term's work, we may assume that the fault was not entirely his. Of the university Milton was severely critical. Later in his life he spoke of himself as never greatly admiring it. But his diligence and brilliance as a student won for him the approbation of the authorities. He acknowledged "publicly, with all grateful mind, that more than ordinary favor and respect, which I found above any of my equals at the hands of those courteous and learned men, the fellows of that college wherein I spent seven years: who, at my parting, after I had taken two degrees . . . signified many ways how much better it would content them that I would stay."

When Milton left the university, he was still undecided as to his life work. His father had expected him to become a clergyman of the Church of England. This, however, had become impossible for him. His reason for not entering the Church he stated fully. To the service of the Church "by the intentions of my parents and friends, I was destined of a child, and in mine own resolutions: till coming to some maturity of years, and perceiving what tyranny had invaded the church, that he who would take orders must subscribe himself slave, and take an oath withal, which, unless he took with a conscience that would retch, he must either straight perjure, or split his faith; I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with

servitude and forswearing." Thus he was "church-outed by the prelates," that is, by Laud and his followers.

Before Milton left college, his father had retired from business and moved to Horton in Buckinghamshire. This region, according to Professor Masson, "is a rich, teeming, verdurous flat, charming by its appearance of plenty, and by the goodly show of wood along the fields and pastures, in the nooks where the houses nestle, and everywhere in all directions to the sky-bound verge of the landscape. . . . There are elms, alders, poplars, and cedars; there is no lack of shrubbery and hedging; and in the spring the orchards are abloom with white and pink for miles around." It was an ideal spot for the writing of "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso." In Horton the young poet lived five years; he "spent a complete holiday in reading over the Greek and Latin writers." Occasionally he went to London to buy books and to take lessons in mathematics or in music, subjects in which his interest was keen.

In the university Milton wrote, besides letters and college exercises in Latin and in English, several poems which gave promise of greater work to come. Of these "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," an ode in thirty-one stanzas, is the most noteworthy. Others that should be mentioned are "At a Solemn Musick," and "On His Having Arrived at the Age of Twenty-three." The latter, because it possesses peculiar biographical interest, ought to be quoted. It was written just before Milton received the M.A. degree.

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year!

My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,
That I to manhood am arrived so near;
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits indu'th.
Yet, be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Towards which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven.
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-Master's eye.

This sonnet, after Milton had settled in Horton, he inserted in a letter to a friend, who evidently had written to him a criticism of the seeming aimlessness of his life. As it was written some time before, it showed that the young man had already given thought to the subject. The last six lines show Milton's supreme confidence in himself, and his determination not to pluck his laurels untimely. In Horton between 1632 and 1638 he wrote, among other poems, "To the Nightingale," "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," "Arcades," "Comus," and "Lycidas." This is a small body of work for five years, but no one considering its quality can call those years unproductive.

About the first of May, 1638, with a man-servant Milton left England to travel on the continent. In Paris he received distinguished attentions from Lord Scudamore, the English Ambassador, and by him was introduced to "that most learned man, Hugo Grotius, who was the Ambassador from the Queen of Sweden to the French King." Through Nice, Genoa, Leghorn, and Pisa Milton traveled to Florence. In that city he remained two months. Apparently he had good letters of introduction, for in

the Florentine Academies, or literary clubs, he made the acquaintance of "the noble and learned of the city." While there he visited Galileo, but recently freed from imprisonment at Arcetri—imprisonment due to "thinking in Astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought." Thus met the two famous blind men of the seventeenth century, for in thirteen years Milton was himself to be totally blind. That the visit impressed him deeply is proved by the fact that twenty years later in writing *Paradise Lost* he mentioned Galileo twice, once by name. In the fifth book Raphael from the gate of Heaven sees the earth,

> As when by night the glass
> Of Galileo, less assured, observes
> Imagined lands and regions in the Moon.

In October Milton went to Rome. Here he attended a magnificent concert given by Cardinal Barberini. At this concert he heard the famous singer, Leonora Baroni, in whose honor he wrote three Latin epigrams. He had intended to extend his trip to Sicily and Greece; but in Naples he received news of Charles's troubles with the Scots and of the likelihood of civil war; and decided to return to England. "While I was desirous," he writes, "to cross into Sicily and Greece, the sad news of Civil War in England called me back; for I considered it base that, while my fellow-countrymen were fighting at home for liberty, I should be travelling abroad at ease for intellectual culture." Apparently he soon discovered that the tidings were exaggerated. He spent a second two months in Rome, though he had been warned of danger from the Jesuits because of his great freedom in discussing

religious questions. "I had made these resolutions with myself," he says, "not of my own accord to introduce conversation about religion; but, if interrogated respecting the faith, whatsoever I should suffer, to dissemble nothing." In Florence he again spent two months, and received a warm welcome from his friends. Thence he proceeded to Paris by way of Venice, Verona, Milan, and Geneva. About the first of August he was back in England. While on the continent he wrote only in Italian and Latin. His poems in these languages received enthusiastic praise from the distinguished Italians with whom he associated.

1639-1660. Soon after his return to England Milton wrote "Epitaphium Damonis," a Latin elegy on the death of his schoolmate and best of friends, Charles Diodati. His grief was more intimate and personal than that he felt in writing "Lycidas." Hence as an expression of grief the Latin elegy is superior to the English. Biographically, too, the "Epitaphium Damonis" is interesting because in it Milton tells of his plan for writing a great poem. This idea never left his mind. In Italy he had told of his intention "to leave something behind him so written to after times as that they should not willingly let it die." In 1639 he was planning to choose as his theme the early kings of Britain. He announced also in the "Epitaphium Damonis" his intention of writing henceforth in English only.

At this time the King's war with the Scots, known as the First Bishops' War, had just ended. England was thrilling with political unrest. But Milton, the household at Horton having been broken up, took lodgings in London and began preparations for his great poem. At this time he

became the instructor of his two nephews, Edward and John Phillips. Later he taught also some few sons of friends. But in spite of Dr. Johnson's vigorous assertion we must conclude that he was never really a schoolmaster.

From his notebooks kept at this time we learn that he was busily engaged on his projected great poem. He made a list of a hundred subjects, and selected from among them finally the Fall of Satan. There is, in fact, evidence that as early as 1642 he began a poem on this subject. But for about twenty years he was to write scarcely any poetry. A petition against Episcopacy was presented to Parliament by the Puritans. A perfect storm of pamphlets followed it. Milton wrote five pamphlets against Episcopacy, the last published, we believe, in March, 1642.

In 1643 he left London without telling his friends anything about his plans. "About Whitsuntide it was, or a little after," writes Phillips, "that he took a journey into the country, nobody about him certainly knowing the reason, or that it was any more than a journey of recreation; but home he returns a married man that went out a bachelor, his wife being Mary, the eldest daughter of Mr. Richard Powell, then a Justice of the Peace, of Forest-hill, near Shotover, in Oxfordshire." Of Milton's courtship nothing is known. In 1627 Richard Powell acknowledged a debt to John Milton senior of £500. The poet may first have visited the Powell home on business connected with the debt; and this may have led to his meeting his bride-to-be. It was a most unfortunate match. Milton was in the middle of his thirty-fifth year; his wife of her eighteenth. He was a Puritan; she a Royalist. They had no interests in common.

Their honeymoon must have been extremely unhappy. At the end of a month Mrs. Milton returned to her family, leaving with her husband the impression that she would come back to him at Michaelmas, that is, in about two months. When the time came, she refused to return. The result was the publication by Milton of his famous "Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce" in which he maintained that incompatibility of temperament is the strongest reason for divorce. Three more pamphlets on the same subject followed it. Two years later, when the Parliamentary army had overrun Oxfordshire, and the Royalist cause seemed hopeless, the wife returned to her husband.

Liberty is the watchword of all Milton's pamphlets. While advocating liberty of divorce, he wrote on two other subjects connected with liberty. He addressed to his friend, Samuel Hartlib, a German busy with many kinds of projects, a "Tract on Education," in which he set forth his views of an improved system of education for gentlemen's sons. Following this tract came "Areopagitica, or Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing." It urged the Parliament to repeal an order regulating the press by official censors. This is Milton's best piece of prose writing. His other prose works are read now, if they are read at all, because they were written by Milton; the "Areopagitica" is still read because of its intrinsic merit. The argument is convincing, and the style unsurpassed for vigor, richness, and eloquence.

Between 1649 and 1660 Milton wrote many pamphlets, justifying the trial and execution of Charles I., defending the Commonwealth and Protectorate, and trying to prevent the return of the Stuarts. In 1649, in the "Tenure of Kings and

Magistrates," he defended the thesis that the people have the right to depose a tyrannous king or other magistrate. In "Eikonoklastes" he ridiculed the "Eikon Basilike," a book supposed at the time to contain the prayers and meditations of Charles written by him during the latter part of his captivity. It is now thought to be the work of Dr. John Gauden. The most important of the other pamphlets are the "Defensio pro Populo Anglicano" (Defence of the English People) and "Defensio Secunda" (Second Defence). The first, which was a reply to a vindication of Charles by a famous Leyden professor, Salmasius, gained Milton a reputation throughout educated Europe. It was while he was working on this pamphlet that his blindness became complete.

Soon after the death of Charles, Milton was appointed Latin Secretary to the Commonwealth, the name by which England was known during the three years that it was in form a republic. His duty was to conduct in Latin the correspondence of his government with foreign nations and to be its literary defender. This office he held under the Protectorate, when Cromwell became practically a monarch, and during the few months that Richard Cromwell nominally succeeded his father. At the restoration of the Stuarts in 1660 Milton had to hide himself in London. Probably because of a combination in his favor in Parliament he escaped with nothing more serious than being arrested and having to pay fees of about £500 to the officers concerned in the arrest.

His wife died in 1652, leaving three small daughters. A son had died some time before. Milton's relations with his daughters were never pleasant; and most of his biographers have placed most of

the blame on the poet, probably unjustly. There must have been fault on both sides. His daughters were like their mother; and she had not either the disposition or the training that would fit her for a happy life with Milton. An attempt to fix the blame for the unhappiness caused by the marriage of Mary Powell and John Milton is futile.

In 1656 Milton took as his second wife Katherine Woodcock, who died about fifteen months after the marriage, followed to the grave in a month by their infant daughter. The sonnet "On his Deceased Wife" indicates that this marriage proved most happy.

1660-1674. Immediately after the Restoration we must think of Milton as old, blind, reduced in fortune, and disgraced. But his courage never failed him. Before that time there is reason to believe that he had written two books of *Paradise Lost*. By 1665 he had completed it. It might have been published the next year, had not the great fire in London crippled the publishers. In 1667 the first edition was offered for sale. In less than two years thirteen hundred copies were sold. For the seventeenth century this was a large sale. The reception which the poem received warranted Edward Phillips, Milton's nephew, in writing that many not unqualified to judge pronounced it the perfection of its kind of poetry. About the same time Dryden is reported to have said of Milton: "This man cuts us all out and the ancients too." *Paradise Lost,* its author had the pleasure of knowing before his death, was raising him to "the highest heaven of fame."

In 1671 he had completed *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*. In the next three years he prepared for the press a number of prose works,

among them a miniature Latin grammar, a digest of the logic of Ramus, and a *History of Britain*—a romantic narrative of transactions down to the Norman Conquest.

He married in 1663 Elizabeth Minshull, who long survived him. This marriage, though it was in a high degree unromantic—the third Mrs. Milton came on the recommendation of her cousin, Milton's physician—seems to have been happy. We have plenty of evidence of the blind poet's appreciation of his wife's efforts to make him comfortable.

Milton died on the eighth of November, 1674. "All his learned and great friends in London, not without a concourse of the vulgar," writes Toland, "accompanied his body to the church of St. Giles, near Cripplegate, where he was buried in the chancel."

"L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso"

"L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," published in 1645, and probably written at Horton in 1632, were the first poems, Professor Masson thinks, to be composed by Milton after he left the university. They are companion studies, "dedicated to two conditions of mind"—mirthfulness, or joyousness, and pensiveness. Or, if the reader prefers, he may call them dedicated to the joyous man and the pensive man respectively; or, again, a contrast between the pleasures of a worldly life and those of a studious. In the very plan Milton shows his genius. Before him poets had contrasted the two moods; he saw the possibilities of a contrast in companion poems. The balanced structure is apparent throughout. They are in a sense an elaborate antithesis. The first line of each is a command to depart;

then in each comes a genealogy invented by the poet, which is followed by an invocation of the Goddess whose presence is desired. Then throughout with "L'Allegro's" pleasures those of "Il Penseroso" stand in sharp contrast. And always the surroundings and habits harmonize with the mood. The sweetness and quietness of the description is delightful. One may ignore those of Milton's critics who are troubled by inaccuracy in this description. He may not have his facts so nearly right as Wordsworth has his, but he is always true to the spirit of the scene. Most readers will agree with Macaulay that "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" are not so much poems as collections of hints, from each one of which a person is to make a poem for himself. It need not be supposed that in either poem all the pleasures are crowded into one day.

Milton may have taken from various sources ideas used in these poems. In this connection critics always mention "The Author's Abstract of Melancholy" from the preface of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. It can have furnished no more than a hint, though the line,

> Nought so sweet as melancholy,

reminds one of "Il Penseroso's"

> Hail, divinest Melancholy.

In a song in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Nice Valour* occurs the line,

> Hence, all you vain delights,

which again makes the reader think of a line in "Il Penseroso:"

> Hence, vain, deluding Joys.

Professor Neilson has called attention to another possible source in John Marston's *Scourge of Villainy,* Satire XI, a part of which he finds similar both in thought and phrasing to the first lines in "L'Allegro."

In metre Milton's two poems are similar. The body of each is composed of lines of eight syllables, riming in pairs, and with the accent on the even-numbered syllables. But frequently the initial unaccented syllable is missing. The introductory ten lines of each are of six and ten syllables alternately. The rime scheme of these lines is abbacddeec.

"ARCADES"

"Arcades" was "part of an entertainment presented to the Countess Dowager of Derby by some noble persons of her family." She is the lady to whom, as Lady Strange, Spenser dedicated his "Teares of the Muses." Her maiden name was Alice Spenser, and Edmund Spenser was her relative. Her husband, Ferdinando, Lord Strange, became Earl of Derby. She is thought to be the Amaryllis of Spenser's pastoral poem, "Colin Clouts Come Home Again," and her husband the Amyntas whose death is mourned:

> Amyntas quite is gone and lies full low,
> Having his Amaryllis left to mone.
> Helpe, O ye shepheards, helpe ye all in this,
> Helpe Amaryllis this her losse to mourne:
> Her losse is yours, your losse Amyntas is,
> Amyntas, floure of shepheards pride forlorne
> He whilest he lived was the noblest swaine,
> That ever piped in an oaten quill.

In 1600 the widow became the wife of the Lord

Keeper Egerton, but she continued throughout her life to be known as the Countess of Derby. Her second husband in 1616, shortly before his death, was created Viscount Brackley. His son by a former marriage, John Egerton, became Earl of Bridgewater, an honor intended for the father and given to the son immediately, as an indication of great respect for his father's memory. To the Countess of Derby the Earl of Bridgewater was doubly related in that he had married, about 1600, her daughter by her first marriage. The children of the Earl were thus the grandchildren and the step-grandchildren of the Countess of Derby. Professor Masson suggests that they and others of her descendants decided to "present the aged countess with a Masque."

Viscount Brackley and his brother, Mr. Thomas Egerton, sons of the Earl of Bridgewater, had acted in Carew's *Cœlum Brittanicum*, presented at court a short time before. The music of that masque was by Henry Lawes, who was the instructor in music of the Bridgewater children. It was probably through Lawes that Milton was engaged to write the poetry. Milton may have studied music under Lawes, or the latter may have been associated with Milton's father, who was a musician of reputation.

"Comus"

"Comus" was prepared for the same family as "Arcades." In 1631 Charles I appointed the Earl of Bridgewater, Lord President of Wales. This presidency included besides Wales the four western counties of England; and the official seat of the Lord President was Ludlow in Shropshire. The Earl did not begin his duties immediately, but by

the autumn of 1634 he and his family had arrived in Ludlow. The celebration of his inauguration extended over the greater part of that year. Probably the younger members of the family urged the presentation of a masque. Lawes was appointed general manager and musician. Milton was engaged to furnish the literary part. And "Comus" was acted on the twenty-ninth of September in 1634. The Earl's daughter, the Lady Alice, then in her fifteenth year, took the part of the Lady. Lord Brackley and Mr. Thomas Egerton, her younger brothers, took the parts of the two brothers. Lawes acted the part of the attendant spirit and of Thyrsis.

The dialogue of "Comus" is written in blank verse lines of ten syllables, with the accent on the even-numbered syllables. An occasional line with an extra syllable furnishes variety. Eighteen lines (495-512) are in rimed couplets. Lines 93 to 144 and 902 to 1023 are in the same metre as the main portions of "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso." The lines of the songs are of various lengths and rimes.

Masson, after discussing a number of analogous pieces by earlier writers which may have influenced the composition of "Comus," remarks: "Infinitely too much has been made, however, of such coincidences. After any or all of the pieces named, or any others that can be named, the feeling in reading Milton's Masque is that it is all his own, and his own only, a thing absolutely and essentially Miltonic, without precedent or approach to precedent in English or in any other language. The peculiarity consists no less in the power and purity of the doctrine than in the exquisite mythological

invention and the perfection of the literary finish." [1]

THE MASQUE

"Arcades" and "Comus" are masques, a kind of entertainment which attained its final form in the seventeenth century in the hands of musicians like Lawes, architects like Inigo Jones, and dramatists like Ben Jonson. But entertainments similar to the masque had been known in England from very early times. They were called *mummings* or *disguisings*. Their nature is illustrated by a description of a celebration called a *mumming*, held in honor of Richard II at his accession to the throne in 1377. The name *mumming* carries the idea that the masked performers said nothing to indicate who they were. The entertainment would now be called a masquerade. When, however, the emphasis was on the costume rather than on silence, the same disguising prevailed. By the seventeenth century *masque* had supplanted the other names for the form, and masques had become exceedingly popular. The mumming in 1377 ended with a dance, the mummers on one side and the King and Lords on the other. And here we have the important feature of every masque—a group of masked dancers. The stage machinery, which under Inigo Jones became most ingenious and elaborate, the songs, the dialogue, are all the setting for a ball. It is plain that "Comus" is not a typical masque. The dancing in Ben Jonson's *Masque of Queens* must have continued, to judge from Ben's own account of it, fully two hours.

[1] *Life of Milton*, vol. I, p. 622.

A study of the *Masque of Queens* will reveal the main characteristics of the type. This masque was prepared by Jonson at the request of Queen Anne, and presented at Whitehall in February, 1609. Jonson himself has left a complete description of it. It begins with an antimasque, "twelve women, in the habit of hags, . . . not as a masque, but a spectacle of strangeness." . . . While the hags were dancing, "on the sudden was heard a sound of loud music, as if many instruments had made one blast; with which not only the hags themselves, but the hell into which they ran, quite vanished, and . . . in the place of it appeared a glorious and magnificent building . . . in the top of which were discovered the twelve Masquers, sitting upon a throne triumphal . . . circled with all store of light. From whom a person by this time descended, in the furniture of Perseus, and expressing heroic and masculine Virtue began to speak." He explained the situation and introduced the masquers, who were disguised as "Penthesilia, the brave Amazon," "Swift-foot Camilla," and other queens of the ancient world. The twelfth and last was Bel-anna in obvious compliment to Queen Anne, who acted the part.

Perseus concluded with a compliment to King James.

> Lo you, that cherish every great example
> Contracted in yourself; and being so ample
> A field of honor, cannot but embrace
> A spectacle, so full of love, and grace
> Unto your court: where every princely dame
> Contends to be as bounteous of her fame
> To others, as her life was good to her.
> For by their lives they only did confer

> Good to themselves; but, by their fame, to yours,
> And every age, the benefit endures.

At the end of this speech "the throne wherein they sat . . . suddenly changed; and in place of it appeared Fama bona . . . attired in white, with white wings, having a collar of gold about her neck. . . ." After a short speech by Fame, the dancing began.

We can gather from these incomplete quotations from Ben Jonson some idea of the principal characteristics of the masque. Like the *Masque of Queens,* all masques were written by request for particular occasions such as weddings, inaugurations, or coronations. Naturally they contain many compliments. Again masques are of the nature of private theatricals, being unadapted to the theatre and never presented there. The actors were always nobles, or at least of high rank. But professional actors often performed in the antimasque, where greater skill was required than in the masque proper. The antimasque as adapted by Ben Jonson supplied contrast, and thus tended to make the entertainment dramatic. The characters might be allegorical, mythological, or historical. For a wedding masque they would be Juno, Venus, Hymen, and other powers that might be expected to favor the married; or instead they might be Laughter, Love, Harmony, and Delight. Writers of masques ransacked all ancient history and mythology for subjects. They delighted especially in classical characters and in personified abstractions such as Fame, Beauty, and Reason.

Two elements of the masque have not yet been mentioned. The characters are often disguised as shepherds and shepherdesses, but the masque is not

a division of pastoral poetry, as some writers suppose. The popularity of the pastoral idea caused it to appear in many literary forms besides the masque, as, for example, in the dramas of Shakespeare. Secondly, didacticism in the masque had, before Milton wrote "Comus," received the approval of Ben Jonson's example, but the Puritanism of Milton manifests itself in his making the didactic purpose of the masque its central idea.

"Lycidas"

"Lycidas" was written in the fall of 1637, probably in November, in memory of Edward King, a member of Christ's College, Cambridge. He had entered that college in 1626 and had received a fellowship in 1630. Milton had entered in 1625. It has been believed that, had the fellowship been awarded strictly for merit, Milton would have received it. We do not know much about the relations which existed in college between the two men. Some critics have assumed that they were bosom friends, but all we really know is that they were in college together, that without any question they were acquainted, and that probably Milton, like all the other members of Christ's, respected King. We have no reason to think that Milton regarded King with any such warm feelings of friendship as he did Charles Diodati. King, who was intending to become a clergyman, held various offices in the University. In August of his eleventh year in Cambridge he took ship at Chester to cross to Dublin, to visit his relatives. His father, Sir John King, held high office in Ireland. Not far from the English coast the vessel sank, and most of the passengers, including King, were drowned.

On the opening of the University in October King's friends planned to publish a volume of verses in his memory. The volume appeared in January, 1638. It consisted of two parts; the first contained three Greek poems and twenty Latin; the second thirteen English poems. "Lycidas," which was the last poem in the book, and by far the most noteworthy, was signed by the poet's initials only, J. M.

"Lycidas" is a pastoral elegy. An elegy is a song or lyric poem expressing grief. Similar elegies are Shelley's "Adonais" and Matthew Arnold's "Thyrsis." To understand pastoral poetry such as "Lycidas" one must turn back to the writings of Theocritus, born about 300 B.C., in Syracuse, a Greek colony in Sicily. He was a realist in the sense that he watched the shepherds at their work and at their games, listened to their songs, and then depicted them in his poetry, idealized, we believe, but still true to life.

Mr. Andrew Lang thus summarizes "Idyl I" of Theocritus: "The shepherd Thyrsis meets a goatherd, in a shady place beside a spring, and at his invitation sings the Song of Daphnis. This ideal hero of Greek pastoral song had won for his bride the fairest of the Nymphs. Confident in the strength of his passion, he boasted that Love could never subdue him to a new affection. Love avenged himself by making Daphnis desire a strange maiden, but to this temptation he never yielded and so died a constant lover. The song tells how the cattle and the wild things of the wood bewailed him, how Hermes and Priapus gave him counsel in vain, and how with his last breath he retorted the taunts of the implacable Aphrodite."

The song of Daphnis furnished a model a few

years later for Moschus in his *Lament for Bion.* Moschus and Bion lived and wrote in Sicily a little later than Theocritus. In his lament Moschus chose to use the machinery of the Song of Daphnis. Thus pastoral poetry moved one step away from the real. In the *Eclogues* Virgil imitated Theocritus; he made no effort to depict the shepherd life of his own time and country. His *Eclogues* are invariably allegories. In fact, allegory finally was believed to be essential to pastoral poetry, and the departure from realism was complete.

With the Renaissance came throughout Europe a quickened interest in the classics. Italian poets influenced English writers before Milton. The pastoral idea was not confined to the elegy, but was used in prose romances and in the drama. Spenser used it in the *Shepheard's Calendar,* twelve eclogues, one for each month in the year; Sir Philip Sidney in the *Arcadia,* and John Fletcher in *The Faithful Shepherdess.* Long before he wrote "Lycidas," Milton used the form in "Arcades" and partly in "Comus."

"Lycidas" is written in lines of ten syllables with the accent on the even numbered syllables. Fourteen lines have but six syllables and three accents each. They are 4, 19, 21, 33, 41, 43, 48, 56, 79, 88, 90, 95, 108, and 145. The rime is irregular, sometimes it affects two lines; sometimes three or more; once six. Occasional blank verse lines produce further variety. Examples of them are 1, 22, 39. "The poem is an exquisite example of a kind of verse which theorists might pronounce the most perfect and natural of any—that in which the mechanism is elastic, or determined from moment to moment by the swell or shrinking of the meaning or feeling."

MINOR POEMS

As good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life.

—"Areopagitica."

MINOR POEMS

AT A SOLEMN MUSIC°

BLEST pair of Sirens, pledges of Heaven's joy,
Sphere-born° harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse,
Wed your divine sounds, and mixed power employ,
Dead things with inbreathed sense able to pierce;
And to our high-raised phantasy present
That undisturbèd song of pure consent,°
Aye sung before the sapphire-coloured throne°
To Him that sits thereon,
With saintly shout and solemn jubilee;
Where the bright Seraphim in burning row
Their loud uplifted angel-trumpets blow,
And the Cherubic host in thousand quires
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,
With those just Spirits that wear victorious palms,
Hymns devout and holy psalms
Singing everlastingly:
That we on Earth, with undiscording voice,
May rightly answer that melodious noise;°
As once we did, till disproportioned sin°

Jarred against nature's chime,° and with harsh
din
Broke the fair music that all creatures made
To their great Lord, whose love their motion
swayed
In perfect diapason,° whilst they stood
In first obedience, and their state of good.
O, may we soon again renew that song,
And keep in tune with Heaven, till God ere
long
To his celestial consort° us unite,
To live with Him, and sing in endless morn
of light!

ON SHAKESPEARE° 1630

WHAT needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones
The labour of an age in pilèd stones?
Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
Under a star-ypointing° pyramid?
Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a livelong° monument.
For whilst, to the shame of slow-endeavouring art,°
Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued° book
Those Delphic° lines with deep impression took,
Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,
Dost make *us* marble with too much conceiving,°
And so sepúlchred in such pomp dost lie
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

L'ALLEGRO°

HENCE, loathed Melancholy,°
  Of Cerberus° and blackest Midnight born
In Stygian° cave forlorn
  'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth° cell,
  Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous° wings,
And the night-raven° sings;
  There, under ebon shades and low-browed rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
  In dark Cimmerian° desert ever dwell.
But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
In heaven yclept° Euphrosyne,°
And by men heart-easing Mirth;
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,
With two sister Graces more,
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore:
Or whether (as some sager° sing)
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr, with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying,
There, on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,°

Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.°
Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful Jollity,
Quips° and Cranks° and wanton° Wiles,
Nods and Becks and wreathèd Smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's° cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it,° as you go,
On the light fantastic° toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty;
And, if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her,° and live with thee,
In unreproved° pleasure free;
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled° dawn doth rise;
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,°
And at my window bid good-morrow,
Through the sweet-briar or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine;°
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin;
And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before:

Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill:
Sometime walking, not unseen,°
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate
Where the great Sun begins his state,°
Robed in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;°
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale°
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Straight° mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
Whilst the landskip° round it measures:
Russet lawns,° and fallows grey,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains on whose barren breast
The labouring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim, with daisies pied;°
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide;
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosomed° high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The cynosure° of neighbouring eyes.
Hard by a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks,

Where Corydon° and Thyrsis met
Are at their savoury dinner set
Of herbs and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;
And then in haste her bower she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tanned haycock in the mead.
Sometimes, with secure° delight,
The upland° hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks° sound
To many a youth and many a maid
Dancing in the chequered shade,°
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,
Till the livelong daylight fail:
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,°
With stories told of many a feat,
How Faery Mab° the junkets° eat.°
She° was pinched and pulled, she said;
And he,° by Friar's lantern led,
Tells° how the drudging goblin sweat
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
That ten day-labourers could not end;
Then lies him down, the lubber fiend,
And, stretched out all the chimney's° length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,

And crop°-full out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.
Towered cities° please us then,
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds° of peace, high triumphs° hold,
With store of° ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence,° and judge the prize°
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her° grace whom all commend.
There let Hymen° oft appear
In saffron° robe, with taper clear,
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With mask and antique pageantry;
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock° be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild,°
And ever, against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,°
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul° may pierce,
In notes with many a winding bout°
Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,

Where throngs of knights and barons bold

. . .

With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize

Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus'° self may heave his head
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heaped Elysian° flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto to have quite set free
His half-regained Eurydice.°
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.°

IL PENSEROSO°

Hence, vain deluding Joys,
The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bested,°
Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toys!°
Dwell in some idle brain,
And fancies fond° with gaudy shapes possess,°
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sun-beams,
Or likest° hovering dreams,
The fickle pensioners° of Morpheus' train.
But, hail! thou Goddess sage and holy!
Hail, divinest Melancholy!°
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit° the sense of human sight,
And therefore to our weaker view
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's° sister might beseem,
Or that starred Ethiop queen° that strove
To set her beauty's praise above
The Sea-Nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended:
Thee bright-haired Vesta° long of yore
To solitary Saturn bore;

His daughter she; in Saturn's reign
Such mixture was not held a stain.
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's° inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.
Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,°
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole° of cypress lawn°
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come; but keep thy wonted state,°
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing° with the skies,
Thy rapt° soul sitting in thine eyes:
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble,° till
With a sad° leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,
Spare Fast,° that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring
Aye round about Jove's altar sing;
And add to these retired Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure;
But, first and chiefest, with thee bring
Him that yon° soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,
The Cherub Contemplation;°

And the mute Silence hist° along,
'Less Philomel° will deign a song,
In her sweetest saddest plight,°
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
While Cynthia° checks her dragon yoke
Gently o'er the accustomed oak.
Sweet bird,° that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among
I woo, to hear thy even-song;
And, missing thee, I walk unseen°
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon,
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide pathless way,
And oft, as if her head she bowed,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft, on a plat° of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew° sound,
Over some° wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar;
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still removèd° place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's° drowsy charm
To bless the doors from nightly harm.

While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke . . .

Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,°
With thrice-great Hermes,° or unsphere°
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook;
And° of those demons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or underground,°
Whose power hath a true consent
With planet or with element.
Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptred° pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes,° or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine,
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskined° stage.
But, O sad Virgin! that thy power
Might raise Musæus° from his bower;
Or bid the soul of Orpheus° sing
Such notes as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what love did seek;
Or call up him that left half-told°
The story of Cambuscan° bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That owned the virtuous° ring and glass,

And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride;
And if aught else great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of turneys, and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.°
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited° Morn appear,
Not tricked and frounced, as she was wont
With the Attic boy° to hunt,
But kerchieft in a comely cloud,
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or ushered with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his° fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute-drops° from off the eaves.
And, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To archèd walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan° loves
Of pine, or monumental° oak,
Where the rude axe with heavèd stroke
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
There, in close covert, by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish° eye,
While the bee with honeyed thigh,

That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort° as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep.
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings, in airy stream
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eyelids laid;°
And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius° of the wood.
But let my due° feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,°
And love the high embowèd roof,
With antique pillars massy-proof,°
And storied windows° richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell°
Of every star that heaven doth shew,

And every herb that sips the dew,
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures, Melancholy, give;
And I with thee will choose to live.

ARCADES

Part of an Entertainment presented to the Countess Dowager of Derby at Harefield by some Noble Persons of her Family; who appear on the Scene in pastoral habit, moving toward the seat of state, with this song:

I. *Song*

Look, Nymphs and Shepherds, look!
What sudden blaze of majesty
Is that which we from hence descry,
Too divine to be mistook?°
This, this is she
To whom our vows and wishes bend:
Here our solemn search hath end.
Fame,° that her high worth to raise
Seemed erst so lavish and profuse,
We may justly now accuse
Of detraction from her praise:
Less than half we find expressed;
Envy bid conceal the rest.

Mark what radiant state she spreads,
In circle round her shining throne
Shooting her beams like silver threads:

This, this is she alone,
Sitting like a goddess bright
In the centre of her light.

Might she the wise Latona° be,
Or the towered Cybele,°
Mother of a hundred gods?
Juno dares not give her odds:°
Who had thought this clime had held
A deity so unparalleled?

As they come forward, THE GENIUS OF THE WOOD° *appears, and, turning toward them, speaks.*

Genius. Stay, gentle° Swains, for, though in this disguise,
I see bright honour sparkle through your eyes;
Of famous Arcady° ye are, and sprung
Of that renownèd flood, so often sung,
Divine Alpheus, who, by secret sluice,
Stole under seas to meet his Arethuse;°
And ye, the breathing roses of the wood,
Fair silver-buskined Nymphs,° as great and good.
I know this quest of yours and free° intent
Was all in honour and devotion meant
To the great mistress of yon princely shrine,
Whom with low reverence I adore as mine,
And with all helpful service will comply

Stay, gentle Swains, for, though in this disguise,
I see bright honour sparkle through your eyes.

To further this night's glad solemnity,
And lead ye where ye may more near behold
What shallow-searching Fame hath left untold;
Which I full oft, amidst these shades alone,
Have sat to wonder at, and gaze upon.
For know, by lot from Jove, I am the Power
Of this fair wood, and live in oaken bower,
To nurse the saplings tall, and curl° the grove
With ringlets quaint and wanton windings wove;
And all my plants I save from nightly ill
Of noisome winds and blasting vapours chill;
And from the boughs brush off the evil dew,
And heal the harms of thwarting° thunder blue,
Or what the cross dire-looking planet° smites,
Or hurtful worm° with cankered venom bites.
When evening grey doth rise, I fetch my round
Over the mount, and all this hallowed ground;
And early, ere the odorous breath of morn
Awakes the slumbering leaves, or tasselled horn
Shakes the high thicket, haste I all about,
Number my ranks, and visit every sprout
With puissant° words and murmurs° made to bless.
But else, in deep of night, when drowsiness
Hath locked up mortal sense, then listen I
To the celestial Sirens' harmony,°
That sit upon the nine infolded spheres,
And sing to those that hold the vital shears,
And turn the adamantine spindle round

On which the fate of gods and men is wound.
Such sweet compulsion doth in music lie,
To lull the daughters of Necessity,
And keep unsteady Nature to her law,
And the low world in measured motion draw
After the heavenly tune, which none can hear°
Of human mould with gross unpurgèd ear.
And yet such music worthiest were to blaze
The peerless height of her immortal praise
Whose lustre leads us, and for her most fit,
If my inferior hand or voice could hit
Inimitable sounds. Yet, as we go,
Whate'er the skill of lesser gods can show
I will assay, her worth to celebrate,
And so attend ye toward her glittering state;°
Where ye may all, that are of noble stem,
Approach, and kiss her sacred vesture's hem.

II. *Song*

O'er the smooth enamelled green,
Where no print of step hath been,
  Follow me, as I sing
  And touch the warbled string:
Under the shady roof
Of branching elm star-proof
    Follow me.
I will bring you where she sits,
Clad in splendor as befits
    Her deity.

Such a rural Queen
All Arcadia hath not seen.

III. *Song*

Nymphs and Shepherds, dance no more
  By sandy Ladon's° lilied banks;
On old Lycæus,° or Cyllene° hoar,
  Trip no more in twilight ranks;
Though Erymanth° your loss deplore,
  A better soil shall give ye thanks.
From the stony Mænalus°
Bring your flocks, and live with us;
Here ye shall have greater grace,
To serve the Lady of this place.
Though Syrinx° your Pan's mistress were,
Yet Syrinx well might wait on her.
  Such a rural Queen
  All Arcadia hath not seen.

COMUS

"A MASQUE PRESENTED AT LUDLOW CASTLE, 1634, &C."
(For the Title-pages of the Editions of 1637 and 1645 see Notes on p. 115.)

THE PERSONS

THE ATTENDANT SPIRIT, afterwards in the habit of THYRSIS.
COMUS, with his CREW.
THE LADY.
FIRST BROTHER.
SECOND BROTHER.
SABRINA, the Nymph.

The Chief Persons which presented were:—
The Lord Brackley;
Mr. Thomas Egerton, his Brother;
The Lady Alice Egerton.

[This list of Persons, &c., appeared in the Edition of 1645, but was omitted in that of 1673.]

Dedication of Lawes' Edition of 1637.

(Reprinted in the Edition of 1645, but omitted in that of 1673.)

"To the Right Honourable John, Lord Brackley, son and heir-apparent to the Earl of Bridgewater, &c."

"My Lord,

"This Poem, which received its first occasion of birth from yourself and others of your noble family, and much honour from your own person in the performance, now returns again to make a final dedication of itself to you. Although not openly acknowledged by the Author, yet it is a legitimate offspring, so lovely and so much desired that the often copying of it hath tired my pen to give my several friends satisfaction, and brought me to a necessity of producing it to the public view; and now to offer it up, in all rightful devotion, to those fair hopes and rare endowments of your much-promising youth, which give a full assurance to all that know you of a future excellence. Live, sweet Lord, to be the honour of your name; and receive this as your own from the hands of him who hath by many favours been long obliged to your most honoured Parents, and, as in this representation your attendant *Thyrsis*, so now in all real expression

"Your faithful and most humble Servant,

"H. Lawes."

COMUS

The first Scene discovers a wild wood

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT *descends or enters*

BEFORE the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those° immortal shapes
Of bright aerial spirits live insphered°
In regions mild of calm and serene° air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
Which men call Earth, and, with low-thoughted care,
Confined and pestered° in this pinfold° here,
Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives,
After this mortal change,° to her true servants
Amongst the enthroned gods on sainted seats.
Yet some there be that by due° steps aspire
To lay their just hands on that golden key°
That opes the palace of eternity.
To such my errand is; and, but for such,
I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds°
With the rank vapours of this sin-worn mould.°
But to my task. Neptune, besides the sway
Of every salt flood and each ebbing stream,
Took in, by lot twixt high and nether Jove,°
Imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles
That, like to rich and various gems, inlay
The unadornèd° bosom of the deep;

Which he, to grace his tributary gods,
By course commits to several° government,
And gives them leave to wear their sapphire crowns
And wield their little tridents. But this Isle,°
The greatest and the best of all the main,
He quarters° to his blue-haired° deities;
And all this tract° that fronts the falling sun
A noble Peer° of mickle° trust and power
Has in his charge, with tempered awe to guide
An old and haughty° nation, proud in arms:
Where his fair offspring, nursed in princely lore,
Are coming to attend their father's state,°
And new-intrusted sceptre. But their way
Lies through the perplexed° paths of this drear wood,
The nodding horror° of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger;
And here their tender age might suffer peril,
But that, by quick command from sovran Jove,
I was despatched for their defence and guard!
And listen why; for I will tell you now
What never yet was heard in tale or song,
From old or modern bard, in hall or bower.°
Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape
Crushed the sweet poison of misusèd wine,
After the Tuscan mariners transformed,°
Coasting the Tyrrhene shore,° as the winds listed,°

On Circe's island fell. (Who knows not Circe,°
The daughter of the Sun, whose charmèd cup
Whoever tasted lost his upright shape,
And downward fell into a grovelling swine?)
This Nymph, that gazed upon his clustering locks,
With ivy berries wreathed, and his blithe youth,
Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son°
Much like his father, but his mother more,
Whom therefore she brought up, and Comus° named:
Who, ripe° and frolic of his full-grown age,°
Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields,°
At last betakes him to this ominous wood,
And, in thick shelter of black shades imbowered,
Excels his mother at her mighty art;
Offering to every weary traveller
His orient° liquor in a crystal glass,
To quench the drouth of Phœbus;° which as they taste
(For most do taste through fond° intemperate thirst),
Soon as the potion works, their human count'nance,
The express resemblance° of the gods, is changed
Into some brutish form of wolf or bear,
Or ounce° or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,

All other parts remaining as they were,
And they, so perfect is their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before,
And all their friends and native home forget,
To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.°
Therefore, when any favoured of high Jove
Chances to pass through this adventurous° glade,
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star
I shoot from heaven, to give him safe convoy,
As now I do. But first I must put off
These my sky-robes, spun out of Iris' woof,°
And take the weeds and likeness of a swain
That to the service of this house belongs,
Who, with his soft pipe and smooth-dittied song,
Well knows to° still the wild winds when they roar,
And hush the waving woods; nor of less faith,°
And in this office of his mountain watch
Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid
Of this occasion.° But I hear the tread
Of hateful steps; I must be viewless now.

COMUS *enters, with a charming-rod in one hand, his glass in the other; with him a rout of monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistering. They come in making a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands.*

Comus. The star° that bids the shepherd fold
Now the top of heaven doth hold;
And the gilded car of day
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep° Atlantic stream:°
And the slope° sun his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky° pole,
Pacing toward the other goal
Of his chamber in the east.°
Meanwhile, welcome joy and feast,
Midnight shout and revelry,
Tipsy dance and jollity.
Braid your locks with rosy twine,°
Dropping odours, dropping wine.
Rigour now is gone to bed;
And Advice with scrupulous head,
Strict Age, and sour Severity,
With their grave saws,° in slumber lie.
We, that are of purer fire,
Imitate the starry quire,°
Who, in their nightly watchful spheres,°
Lead in swift round the months and years.
The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,
Now to the moon in wavering morrice° move;
And on the tawny sands and shelves
Trip the pert° fairies and the dapper° elves.
By dimpled brook and fountain-brim,
The wood-nymphs, decked with daisies trim,
Their merry wakes° and pastimes keep:

Comus enters, with a charming-rod in one hand, his glass in the other.

What hath night to do with sleep?
Night hath better sweets to prove;
Venus now wakes, and wakens Love.
Come, let us our rites begin;
'Tis only daylight that makes sin,
Which these dun shades will ne'er report.
Hail, goddess of nocturnal sport,
Dark-veiled Cotytto,° to whom the secret flame
Of midnight torches burns! mysterious dame,
That ne'er art called° but when the dragon womb
Of Stygian darkness spets° her thickest gloom,
And makes one blot of all the air!
Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,
Wherein thou ridest with Hecat',° and befriend
Us thy vowed priests, till utmost end
Of all thy dues be done, and none left out
Ere the blabbing eastern scout,
The nice° Morn on the Indian° steep,
From her cabined loop-hole° peep,
And to the tell-tale Sun descry
Our concealed solemnity.
Come, knit hands, and beat the ground
In a light fantastic° round.°

The Measure°

Break off, break off! I feel the different pace°
Of some chaste footing near about this ground.

Run to your shrouds° within these brakes and trees;
Our number may affright. Some virgin sure
(For so I can distinguish by mine art)
Benighted in these woods! Now to my charms,
And to my wily trains:° I shall ere long
Be well stocked with as fair a herd as grazed
About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl°
My dazzling spells into the spongy air,°
Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion,°
And give it false presentments,° lest the place
And my quaint habits° breed astonishment,
And put the damsel to suspicious flight;
Which must not be, for that's against my course.
I, under fair pretence of friendly ends,
And well-placed words of glozing° courtesy,
Baited with reasons not unplausible,
Wind me° into the easy-hearted man,
And hug him into snares. When once her eye
Hath met the virtue° of this magic dust
I shall appear some harmless villager,
Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.°
But here she comes; I fairly° step aside,
And hearken, if I may her business hear.

The LADY *enters*

Lady. This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,

My best guide now. Methought it was the sound
Of riot and ill-managed merriment,
Such as the jocund flute or gamesome pipe
Stirs up among the loose° unlettered hinds,
When, for their teeming flocks and granges full,
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,°
And thank the gods amiss. I should be loth
To meet the rudeness and swilled insolence°
Of such late wassailers;° yet, oh! where else
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet
In the blind mazes of this tangled wood?
My brothers, when they saw me wearied out
With this long way, resolving here to lodge
Under the spreading favour of these pines,
Stepped, as they said, to the next thicket-side
To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit
As the kind hospitable woods provide.
They left me then when the grey-hooded Even,
Like a sad° votarist in palmer's weed,
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain.°
But where they are, and why they came not back,
Is now the labour of my thoughts. 'Tis likeliest
They had engaged° their wandering steps too far;

And envious darkness, ere they could return,
Had stole them from me. Else, O thievish Night,
Why should'st thou, but for some felonious end,
In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars
That Nature hung in heaven, and filled their lamps
With everlasting oil, to give due light
To the misled and lonely traveller?
This is the place, as well as I may guess,
Whence even now the tumult of loud mirth
Was rife,° and perfect in my listening ear;
Yet nought but single° darkness do I find.
What might this be? A thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory,
Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
And airy tongues that syllable men's names
On sands and shores and desert wildernesses.
These thoughts may startle well,° but not astound
The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
By a strong siding° champion, Conscience.
O, welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,
And thou unblemished form of Chastity!°
I see ye visibly, and now believe
That He, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill

Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
Would send a glistering° guardian, if need were,
To keep my life and honour unassailed. . . .
Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?
I did not err: there does a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
And casts° a gleam over this tufted grove.
I cannot hallo to my brothers, but
Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest
I'll venture; for my new-enlivened spirits
Prompt me, and they perhaps are not far off.

Song

Sweet Echo,° sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen
Within thy airy shell°
By slow Meander's° margent green,
And in the violet-embroidered vale
Where the love-lorn nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well:
Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
That likest thy Narcissus° are?
O, if thou have
Hid them in some flowery cave,
Tell me but where,
Sweet Queen of Parley,° Daughter of the Sphere!°

So may'st thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace° to all Heaven's harmonies!

Comus. Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
And with these raptures moves the vocal° air
To testify his° hidden residence.
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall° smoothing the raven down
Of darkness till it smiled! I have oft heard
My mother Circe with the Sirens° three,
Amidst the flowery-kirtled° Naiades,°
Culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs,
Who, as they sung, would take the prisoned soul,
And lap it in Elysium:° Scylla° wept,
And chid her barking waves into attention,
And fell Charybdis murmured soft applause.
Yet they in pleasing slumber lulled the sense,
And in sweet madness robbed it of itself;
But such a sacred and home-felt° delight,
Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
I never heard till now. I'll speak to her,
And she shall be my queen.—Hail, foreign wonder!

Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?

Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,
Unless the goddess that in rural shrine
Dwell'st here with Pan° or Sylvan,° by blest song
Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.
Lady. Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost° that praise
That is addressed to unattending ears.
Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift°
How to regain my severed company,
Compelled me to awake the courteous Echo
To give me answer from her mossy couch.
Comus. What chance, good Lady, hath bereft you thus?
Lady. Dim darkness and this heavy labyrinth.
Comus. Could that divide you from near-ushering guides?
Lady. They left me weary on a grassy turf.
Comus. By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why?
Lady. To seek i' the valley some cool friendly spring.
Comus. And left your fair side all unguarded, Lady?
Lady. They were but twain, and purposed quick return.

Comus. Perhaps forestalling° night prevented them.

Lady. How easy my misfortune is to hit!°

Comus. Imports their loss,° beside the present need?

Lady. No less than if I should my brothers lose.

Comus. Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?

Lady. As smooth as Hebe's° their unrazored lips.°

Comus. Two such I saw, what time° the laboured° ox
In his loose traces from the furrow came,
And the swinked° hedger at his supper sat.
I saw them under a green mantling vine,
That crawls along the side of yon small hill,
Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots;
Their port was more than human, as they stood.
I took it for a faery vision
Of some gay creatures of the element,°
That in the colours of the rainbow live,
And play i' the plighted° clouds. I was awe-strook.
And, as I passed, I worshipped. If those you seek,
It were a journey like the path to Heaven
To help you find them.

Lady. Gentle villager,
What readiest way would bring me to that place?
Comus. Due west it rises from this shrubby point.
Lady. To find out that, good shepherd, I suppose,
In such a scant allowance of star-light,
Would overtask the best land-pilot's art,
Without the sure guess of well-practised feet.
Comus. I know each lane, and every alley green,
Dingle,° or bushy dell, of this wild wood,
And every bosky bourn° from side to side,
My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood;
And, if your stray attendance be yet lodged,
Or shroud° within these limits, I shall know
Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted° lark
From her thatched pallet rouse.° If otherwise,
I can conduct you, Lady, to a low
But loyal cottage, where you may be safe
Till further quest.
Lady. Shepherd, I take thy word,
And trust thy honest-offered courtesy,
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds,
With smoky rafters, than in tapestry halls
And courts° of princes, where it first was named,
And yet is most pretended. In a place

Less warranted° than this, or less secure,
I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.
Eye me, blest Providence, and square° my trial
To my proportioned strength! Shepherd, lead on. . . .

The Two Brothers

Elder Brother. Unmuffle, ye faint stars; and thou, fair moon,
That wont'st to love the traveller's benison,°
Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
And disinherit° Chaos, that reigns here
In double night of darkness and of shades;
Or, if your influence be quite dammed up
With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,
Though a rush-candle° from the wicker hole°
Of some clay habitation, visit us
With thy long levelled rule° of streaming light,
And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,°
Or Tyrian° Cynosure.°

Second Brother. Or, if our eyes
Be barred that happiness, might we but hear
The folded flocks, penned in their wattled cotes,°
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,°
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock

Count the night-watches to his feathery dames,
'Twould be some solace yet, some little cheering,
In this close dungeon of innumerous boughs.
But, oh, that hapless virgin, our lost sister!
Where may she wander now, whither betake her
From the chill dew, amongst rude burs and thistles?
Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,
Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm
Leans° her unpillowed head, fraught with sad fears.
What if° in wild amazement and affright,
Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp
Of savage hunger, or of savage heat!°

Elder Brother. Peace, brother: be not over-exquisite
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils;°
For, grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
What need a man forestall his date of grief,
And run to meet what he would most avoid?
Or, if they be but false alarms of fear,
How bitter is such self-delusion!
I do not think my sister so to seek,°
Or so unprincipled° in virtue's book,
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
As that the single want of light and noise

(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not)
Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
And put them into misbecoming plight.
Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk. And Wisdom's self
Oft seeks to° sweet retired solitude,
Where, with her best nurse, Contemplation,
She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,
That, in the various bustle of resort,
Were all to-ruffled,° and sometimes impaired.
He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i' the centre,° and enjoy bright day:
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon.

Second Brother. 'Tis most true
That musing Meditation most affects°
The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,
And sits as safe as in a senate-house;
For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,°
His few books, or his beads,° or maple dish,
Or do his grey hairs any violence?
But Beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree°
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard

Peace, brother: be not over-exquisite
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils

Of dragon-watch with unenchanted° eye
To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit,
From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.
You may as well spread out the unsunned° heaps
Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den,
And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope
Danger will wink on° Opportunity,
And let a single helpless maiden pass
Uninjured in this wild surrounding waste.
Of night or loneliness it recks me not;°
I fear the dread events that dog them both,
Lest some ill-greeting touch attempt the person
Of our unowned° sister.

Elder Brother. I do not, brother,
Infer° as if I thought my sister's state
Secure without all doubt or controversy;
Yet, where an equal poise of hope and fear
Does arbitrate the event, my nature is
That I incline to hope rather than fear,
And gladly banish squint° suspicion.
My sister is not so defenceless left
As you imagine; she has a hidden strength,
Which you remember not.

Second Brother. What hidden strength,
Unless the strength of Heaven, if you mean that?

Elder Brother. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,

Which, if° Heaven gave it, may be termed her own.
'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity:
She that has that is clad in complete steel,
And, like a quivered nymph with arrows keen,
May trace° huge forests, and unharboured° heaths,
Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds;
Where, through the sacred rays of chastity,
No savage fierce, bandite,° or mountaineer,
Will dare to soil her virgin purity.
Yea, there where very desolation dwells,
By grots and caverns shagged with horrid shades,
She may pass on with unblenched majesty,
Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.
Some say no evil thing that walks by night,
In fog or fire, by lake or moorish fen,
Blue meagre hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost,
That breaks his magic chains at curfew° time,
No goblin or swart faery of the mine,°
Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.
Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call
Antiquity from the old schools of Greece
To testify the arms of chastity?
Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow,
Fair silver-shafted queen for ever chaste,
Wherewith she tamed the brinded° lioness
And spotted mountain-pard, but set at nought
The frivolous bolt of Cupid; gods and men

Feared her stern frown, and she was queen o' the woods.
What was that snaky-headed Gorgon° shield
That wise Minerva wore, unconquered virgin,
Wherewith she freezed her foes to congealed stone,
But rigid looks of chaste austerity,
And noble grace that dashed brute violence
With sudden adoration and blank awe?
So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity
That, when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried angels lackey° her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
And in clear dream and solemn vision
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear;
Till oft converse° with heavenly habitants
Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal. But, when lust,
By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
But most by lewd and lavish act of sin,
Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
The soul grows clotted by contagion,
Imbodies, and imbrutes,° till she quite lose
The divine property of her first being.
Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp
Oft seen in charnel-vaults and sepulchres,

Lingering and sitting by a new-made grave,
As loth to leave the body that it° loved,
And linked itself by carnal sensualty
To a degenerate and degraded state.
Second Brother. How charming is divine Philosophy!
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectared° sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns.
Elder Brother. List! list! I hear
Some far-off hallo break the silent air.
Second Brother. Methought so too; what should it be?
Elder Brother. For certain,
Either some one, like us, night-foundered here,
Or else some neighbour woodman, or, at worst,
Some roving robber calling to his fellows.
Second Brother. Heaven keep my sister! Again, again, and near!
Best draw, and stand upon our guard.
Elder Brother. I'll hallo.
If he be friendly, he comes well: if not,
Defence is a good cause, and Heaven be for us!

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *habited like a shepherd*

That hallo I should know. What are you? Speak.

Come not too near; you fall on iron stakes° else.

Spirit. What voice is that? my young Lord? speak again.

Second Brother. O brother, 'tis my father's Shepherd, sure.

Elder Brother. Thyrsis!° whose artful strains have oft delayed
The huddling brook to hear his madrigal,°
And sweetened every musk-rose of the dale.
How camest thou here, good swain? Hath any ram
Slipped from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,
Or straggling wether the pent flock forsook?
How couldst thou find this dark sequestered nook?

Spirit. O my loved master's heir, and his next° joy,
I came not here on such a trivial toy°
As a strayed ewe, or to pursue the stealth
Of pilfering wolf; not all the fleecy wealth
That doth enrich these downs is worth a thought
To° this my errand, and the care it brought.
But, oh! my virgin Lady, where is she?
How chance° she is not in your company?

Elder Brother. To tell thee sadly,° Shepherd, without blame
Or our neglect, we lost her as we came.

Spirit. Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true.

Elder Brother. What fears, good Thyrsis? Prithee briefly shew.

Spirit. I'll tell ye. 'Tis not vain or fabulous.
(Though so esteemed by shallow ignorance)
What the sage poets,° taught by the heavenly Muse,
Storied of old in high immortal verse
Of dire Chimeras° and enchanted isles,
And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to Hell;
For such there be, but unbelief is blind.
Within the navel° of this hideous wood,
Immured in cypress shades, a sorcerer dwells,
Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,
Deep skilled in all his mother's witcheries,
And here to every thirsty wanderer
By sly enticement gives his baneful cup,
With many murmurs° mixed, whose pleasing poison
The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
And the inglorious likeness of a beast
Fixes instead, unmoulding° reason's mintage
Charactered in the face. This have I learnt
Tending my flocks hard by i' the hilly crofts°
That brow° this bottom glade; whence night by night
He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl
Like stabled wolves,° or tigers at their prey,
Doing abhorred rites to Hecate°

In their obscurèd haunts of inmost bowers.
Yet have they many baits and guileful spells
To inveigle and invite the unwary sense
Of them that pass unweeting° by the way.
This evening late, by then° the chewing flocks
Had ta'en their supper on the savoury herb
Of knot-grass dew-besprent,° and were in fold,
I sat me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting honeysuckle, and began,
Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
To meditate° my rural minstrelsy,
Till fancy had her fill. But ere a close°
The wonted roar was up amidst the woods,
And filled the air with barbarous dissonance;
At which I ceased, and listened them awhile,
Till an unusual stop° of sudden silence
Gave respite to the drowsy-flighted° steeds
That draw the litter of close-curtained Sleep.
At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound
Rose like a stream of rich distilled perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence°
Was took° ere she was ware, and wished she might
Deny her nature, and be never more,
Still to be so displaced. I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of Death. But, oh! ere long
Too well I did perceive it was the voice
Of my most honoured Lady, your dear sister.

Amazed I stood, harrowed with grief and fear;
And 'O poor hapless nightingale,' thought I,
'How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!'
Then down the lawns° I ran with headlong haste,
Through paths and turnings often trod by day,
Till, guided by mine ear, I found the place
Where that damned wizard, hid in sly disguise
(For so by certain signs I knew), had met
Already, ere my best speed could prevent,°
The aidless innocent lady, his wished prey;
Who gently asked if he had seen such two,
Supposing him some neighbour villager.
Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guessed
Ye were the two she meant; with that I sprung
Into swift flight, till I had found you here;
But further know I not.

Second Brother. O night and shades,
How are ye joined with hell in triple knot
Against the unarmed weakness of one virgin,
Alone and helpless! Is this the confidence
You gave me, brother?

Elder Brother. Yes, and keep it still;
Lean on it safely; not a period°
Shall be unsaid for me. Against the threats
Of malice or of sorcery, or that power
Which erring men call Chance, this I hold firm:
Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt,

Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled;
Yea, even that which Mischief meant most harm
Shall in the happy trial° prove most glory.
But evil on itself shall back recoil,
And mix no more with goodness, when at last,
Gathered like scum, and settled to itself,
It shall be in eternal restless change
Self-fed and self-consumed. If this fail,
The pillared firmament° is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble. But come, let's on!
Against the opposing will and arm of Heaven
May never this just sword be lifted up;
But, for° that damned magician, let him be girt
With all the griesly legions that troop
Under the sooty flag of Acheron,
Harpies° and Hydras,° or all the monstrous forms
'Twixt Africa and Ind, I'll find him out,
And force him to return his purchase° back,
Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,
Cursed as his life.

Spirit. Alas! good venturous youth,
I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise;°
But here thy sword can do thee little stead.°
Far other arms and other weapons must
Be those that quell the might of hellish charms.

He with his bare° wand can unthread thy joints,
And crumble all thy sinews.
Elder Brother. Why, prithee, Shepherd,
How durst thou then thyself approach so near
As to make this relation?°
Spirit. Care and utmost shifts°
How to secure the Lady from surprisal
Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,°
Of small regard to see to, yet well skilled
In every virtuous° plant and healing herb
That spreads her verdant leaf to the morning ray.
He loved me well, and oft would beg me sing;
Which when I did, he on the tender grass
Would sit, and hearken even to ecstasy,
And in requital ope his leathern scrip,°
And show me simples° of a thousand names,
Telling their strange and vigorous faculties.
Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,
But of divine effect, he culled me out.
The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,
But in another country, as he said,
Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil:
Unknown, and like esteemed, and the dull swain
Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon;°
And yet more med'cinal is it than that Moly°
That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave.

He called it Hæmony,° and gave it me,
And bade me keep it as of sovran° use
'Gainst all enchantments, mildew blast, or damp,
Or ghastly Furies'° apparition.
I pursed it up, but little reckoning made,
Till now that this extremity compelled.
But now I find it true; for by this means
I knew the foul enchanter, though disguised,
Entered the very lime-twigs° of his spells,
And yet came off. If you have this about you
(As I will give you when we go) you may
Boldly assault the necromancer's hall;
Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood
And brandished blade rush on him: break his glass,
And shed the luscious liquor on the ground;
But seize his wand. Though he and his curst crew
Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high,
Or, like the sons of Vulcan, vomit smoke,°
Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.

Elder Brother. Thyrsis, lead on apace; I'll follow thee;
And some good angel bear a shield before us!

The Scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness: soft music, tables spread with all dainties. COMUS *appears with his rabble, and the* LADY *set in an enchanted Chair: to whom he offers his glass; which she puts by, and goes about° to rise*

Comus. Nay, Lady, sit. If I but wave this wand,
Your nerves are all chained up in alabaster,
And you a statue, or as Daphne° was,
Root-bound, that fled Apollo.
Lady. Fool, do not boast.
Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind
With all thy charms, although this corporal rind°
Thou hast immanacled while Heaven sees good.
Comus. Why are you vexed, Lady? why do you frown?
Here dwell no frowns, nor anger; from these gates
Sorrow flies far. See, here be all the pleasures
That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
Brisk as the April buds in primrose season.
And first behold this cordial julep° here,
That flames and dances in his° crystal bounds,
With spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mixed.
Not that Nepenthes,° which the wife of Thone
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena
Is of such power to stir up joy as this,
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.
Why should you be so cruel to yourself,
And to those dainty limbs, which Nature lent

Nay, Lady, sit. If I but wave this wand,
Your nerves are all chained up in alabaster.

For gentle usage and soft delicacy?
But you invert the covenants of her trust,
And harshly deal, like an ill borrower,
With that which you received on other terms,
Scorning the unexempt condition°
By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
That° have been tired all day without repast,
And timely rest have wanted. But, fair virgin,
This will restore all soon.
Lady. 'Twill not, false traitor!
'Twill not restore the truth and honesty
That thou hast banished from thy tongue with lies.
Was this the cottage and the safe abode
Thou told'st me of? What grim aspects are these,
These oughly°-headed monsters? Mercy guard me!
Hence with thy brewed enchantments, foul deceiver!
Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence
With vizored° falsehood and base forgery?°
And wouldst thou seek again to trap me here
With liquorish° baits, fit to ensnare a brute?
Were it a draught for Juno when she banquets,
I would not taste thy treasonous offer. None
But such as are good men can give good things;
And that which is not good is not delicious
To a well-governed and wise appetite.

Comus. O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
To those budge° doctors of the Stoic fur,
And fetch their precepts from the Cynic tub,°
Praising the lean and sallow Abstinence!
Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth
With such a full and unwithdrawing° hand,
Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks,
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,
But all to° please and sate the curious° taste?
And set to work millions of spinning worms,
That in their green shops weave the smooth-haired silk,
To deck her sons; and, that no corner might
Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins
She hutched° the all-worshipped ore and precious gems,
To store her children with. If all the world
Should, in a pet of temperance, feed on pulse,°
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,°
The All-giver would be unthanked, would be unpraised,
Not half his riches known, and yet despised;
And we should serve him as a grudging master,
As a penurious niggard of his wealth,
And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons,

Who° would be quite surcharged with her own
weight,
And strangled with her waste fertility:
The earth cumbered, and the winged air darked
with plumes,
The herds would over-multitude their lords;
The sea o'er fraught would swell, and the un-
sought diamonds
Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep,
And so bestud with stars, that they below
Would grow inured to light, and come at last
To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.
List, Lady; be not coy,° and be not cozened°
With that same vaunted name, Virginity.
Beauty° is Nature's coin; must not be hoarded,
But must be current; and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,
Unsavoury in the enjoyment of itself.
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
It withers on the stalk with languished head.
Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown
In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,
Where most may wonder at the workmanship.
It is for homely features to keep home;
They had their name thence: coarse complex-
ions
And cheeks of sorry grain° will serve to ply
The sampler,° and to tease° the huswife's
wool.
What need a vermeil-tinctured lip for that,

Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn?
There was another meaning in these gifts;
Think what, and be advised; you are but young yet.

Lady. I had not thought to have unlocked my lips
In this unhallowed air, but that this juggler
Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,
Obtruding false rules pranked in reason's garb.
I hate when vice can bolt° her arguments
And virtue has no tongue to check her pride.
Impostor! do not charge most innocent Nature,
As if she would her children should be riotous
With her abundance. She, good cateress,
Means her provision only to the good,
That live according to her sober laws,
And holy dictate of spare Temperance.
If every just man that now pines with want
Had but a moderate and beseeming share
Of that which lewdly-pampered Luxury
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
Nature's full blessings would be well-dispensed
In unsuperfluous even proportion,
And she no whit encumbered with her store;
And then the Giver would be better thanked,
His praise due paid: for swinish gluttony
Ne'er looks to Heaven amidst his gorgeous feast,
But with besotted base ingratitude

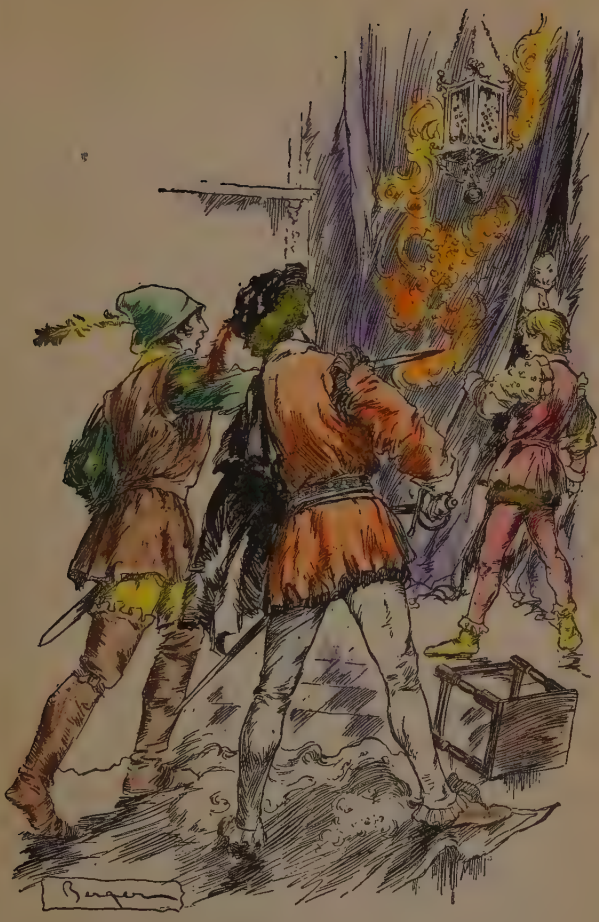
Crams, and blasphemes his Feeder. Shall I go on?
Or have I said enow? To him that dares
Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
Against the sun-clad power of chastity
Fain would I something say;—yet to what end?
Thou hast nor ear, nor soul, to apprehend
The sublime notion and high mystery
That must be uttered to unfold the sage
And serious doctrine of Virginity;
And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know
More happiness than this thy present lot.
Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetoric,
That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence;°
Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced.
Yet, should I try, the uncontrollèd worth
Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
To such a flame of sacred vehemence
That dumb things would be moved to sympathize,
And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and shake,
Till all thy magic structures, reared so high,
Were shattered into heaps o'er thy false head.

Comus. She fables not. I feel that I do fear

Her words set off° by some superior power;
And, though not mortal, yet a cold shudder-
ing dew
Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove°
Speaks thunder and the chains of Erebus°
To some of Saturn's crew.° I must dissemble,
And try her yet more strongly.—Come, no
more!
This is mere moral babble, and direct
Against the canon laws° of our foundation.°
I must not suffer this; yet 'tis but the lees°
And settlings of a melancholy blood.
But this will cure all straight; one sip of this
Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight
Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and
taste . . .

The BROTHERS *rush in with swords drawn, wrest his glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground: his rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven in. The* ATTENDANT SPIRIT *comes in*

Spirit. What! have you let the false en-
chanter scape?
O ye mistook; ye should have snatched his
wand,
And bound him fast. Without his rod re-
versed,°
And backward mutters of dissevering power,
We cannot free the Lady that sits here



What! have you let the false enchanter scape?

In stony fetters fixed and motionless.
Yet stay: be not disturbed; now I bethink me,
Some other means I have which may be used,
Which once of Melibœus° old I learnt,
The soothest° shepherd that e'er piped on plains.
There is a gentle Nymph not far from hence,
That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn° stream:
Sabrina° is her name: a virgin pure;
Whilom she was the daughter of Locrine,
That had the sceptre from his father Brute.
She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
Of her enragèd stepdame, Guendolen,
Commended her fair innocence to the flood
That stayed her flight with his cross-flowing course.
The water-nymphs, that in the bottom played,
Held up their pearled wrists, and took her in,
Bearing her straight to aged Nereus'° hall;
Who, piteous of her woes, reared her lank head,
And gave her to his daughters to imbathe
In nectared° lavers° strewed with asphodil,°
And through the porch and inlet of each sense
Dropt in ambrosial oils, till she revived,
And underwent a quick immortal change,
Made Goddess of the river. Still she retains
Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve
Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,

Helping° all urchin° blasts, and ill-luck signs
That the shrewd meddling elf delights to make,
Which she with precious vialed liquors heals:
For which the shepherds, at their festivals,
Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,
And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream
Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils.
And, as the old swain° said, she can unlock
The clasping charm, and thaw the numbing spell,
If she be right invoked in warbled song;
For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift
To aid a virgin, such as was herself,
In hard-besetting need. This will I try,
And add the power of some adjuring verse.

Song

Sabrina fair,
Listen where thou art sitting
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
In twisted braids of lilies knitting
The loose train of thy amber-dropping° hair;
Listen for dear honour's sake,
Goddess of the silver lake,
Listen and save!

Listen, and appear to us,
In name of great Oceanus,°
By the earth-shaking Neptune's° mace,
And Tethy's° grave majestic pace;
By hoary Nereus'° wrinkled look,
And the Carpathian° wizard's hook;°
By scaly Triton's° winding shell,
And old soothsaying Glaucus'° spell;
By Leucothea's° lovely hands,
And her son that rules the strands;
By Thetis'° tinsel-slippered feet,
And the songs of Sirens sweet;
By dead Parthenope's° dear tomb,
And fair Ligea's° golden comb,
Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks
Sleeking her soft alluring locks;
By all the nymphs that nightly dance
Upon thy streams with wily glance;
Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head
From thy coral-paven bed,
And bridle in thy headlong wave,
Till thou our summons answered have.
Listen and save!

SABRINA *rises, attended by Water-nymphs, and sings*

By the rushy-fringèd bank,
Where grows the willow and the osier° dank,

My sliding chariot stays,
Thick set with agate, and the azurn° sheen
Of turkis° blue, and emerald green,
That in the channel strays:°
Whilst from off the waters fleet
Thus I set my printless feet
O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
That bends not as I tread.
Gentle swain, at thy request
I am here!
Spirit. Goddess dear,
We implore thy powerful hand
To undo the charmèd band
Of true virgin here distressed
Through the force and through the wile
Of unblessed enchanter vile.
Sabrina. Shepherd, 'tis my office best
To help ensnarèd chastity.
Brightest Lady, look on me.
Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
Drops that from my fountain pure
I have kept of precious cure;
Thrice upon thy finger's tip,
Thrice upon thy rubied lip:
Next this marbled venomed seat,
Smeared with gums of glutinous heat,°
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold.
Now the spell hath lost his hold;
And I must haste ere morning hour
To wait in Amphitrite's bower.°

SABRINA *descends, and the* LADY *rises out of her seat*

Spirit. Virgin, daughter of Locrine,
Sprung of old Anchises' line,°
May thy brimmèd waves for this
Their full tribute never miss
From a thousand petty rills,
That tumble down the snowy hills:
Summer drouth or singèd air
Never scorch thy tresses° fair,
Nor wet October's torrent flood
Thy molten crystal fill with mud;
May thy billows roll ashore
The beryl and the golden ore;
May thy lofty head° be crowned
With many a tower and terrace round,°
And here and there thy banks upon°
With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.
Come, Lady; while Heaven lends us grace,
Let us fly this cursed place,
Lest the sorcerer us entice
With some other new device.
Not a waste or needless sound
Till we come to holier ground.
I shall be your faithful guide
Through this gloomy covert wide;
And not many furlongs thence
Is your Father's residence,
Where this night are met in state
Many a friend to gratulate°

His wished presence, and beside
All the swains that there abide
With jigs and rural dance resort.
We shall catch them at their sport,
And our sudden coming there
Will double all their mirth and cheer.
Come, let us haste; the stars grow high,
But Night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.

The Scene changes, presenting Ludlow Town, and the President's Castle: then come in Country Dancers;° after them the ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *with the two* BROTHERS *and* THE LADY.

Song

Spirit. Back, shepherds, back! Enough your play
Till next sun-shine holiday.
Here be, without duck or nod,
Other trippings to be trod
Of lighter toes, and such court guise
As Mercury° did first devise
With the mincing Dryades°
On the lawns and on the leas.

This second Song presents them to their Father and Mother

Noble Lord and Lady bright,
I have brought ye new delight.

Back, shepherds, back! Enough your play
Till next sun-shine holiday.

Here behold so goodly grown
Three fair branches of your own.
Heaven hath timely tried their youth,
Their faith, their patience, and their truth,
And sent them here through hard assays°
With a crown of deathless praise,
To triumph in victorious dance
O'er sensual folly and intemperance.

The dances ended, the SPIRIT *epiloguizes*

Spirit. To the ocean now I fly,
And those happy climes that lie
Where day never shuts his eye,
Up in the broad fields of the sky.
There I suck the liquid air,°
All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus,° and his daughters three
That sing about the golden tree.
Along the crispèd° shades and bowers
Revels the spruce° and jocund Spring;
The Graces° and the rosy-bosomed Hours°
Thither all their bounties bring.
There eternal Summer dwells,
And west winds with musky wing
About the cedarn° alleys fling
Nard and cassia's° balmy smells.
Iris° there with humid bow

Waters the odorous banks, that blow
Flowers of more mingled hue
Than her purfled° scarf can shew,
And drenches with Elysian° dew
(List, mortals, if your ears be true)
Beds of hyacinth and roses,
Where young Adonis° oft reposes,
Waxing well of his deep wound,°
In slumber soft, and on the ground
Sadly sits the Assyrian queen.°
But far above, in spangled sheen,
Celestial Cupid, her famed son, advanced,
Holds his dear Psyche,° sweet entranced
After her wandering labours long,
Till free consent the gods among
Make her his eternal bride,
And from her fair unspotted side
Two blissful twins° are to be born,
Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.

But now my task is smoothly done;
I can fly, or I can run
Quickly to the green earth's end,
Where the bowed welkin° slow doth bend,
And from thence can soar as soon
To the corners of the moon.
Mortals, that would follow me,

Love Virtue; she alone is free.
She can teach ye how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime;°
Or, if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.°

LYCIDAS°

In this Monody° the Author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish Seas, 1637; and, by occasion,° foretells the ruin of our corrupted Clergy, then in their height.

YET once more,° O ye laurels,° and once more,
Ye myrtles brown,° with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.°
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear°
Compels° me to disturb your season due;
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew
Himself to° sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter° to the parching° wind,
Without the meed° of some melodious° tear.
Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well°
That from beneath the seat of Jove° doth spring;
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain and coy° excuse:
So may some gentle Muse°

Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven heel

With lucky° words favour *my* destined urn,
And as he passes turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud!
For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,°
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill;
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,
We drove a-field, and both together heard
What time the grey-fly° winds her sultry horn,
Battening° our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the star° that rose at evening bright
Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute;
Tempered to the oaten flute
Rough Satyrs° danced, and Fauns° with cloven heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long;
And old Damœtas° loved to hear our song.
But, oh! the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone and never must return!
Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
With wild thyme and the gadding° vine o'ergrown,
And all their echoes, mourn.

The willows, and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker° to the rose,
Or taint-worm° to the weanling° herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,
When first the white-thorn° blows;
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.
Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep°
Where your old bards, the famous Druids,° lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona° high,
Nor yet where Deva° spreads her wizard° stream.
Ay me! I fondly° dream
"Had ye been there," . . . for what could that have done?
What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,
The Muse° herself, for her enchanting son,
Whom universal nature did lament,
When, by the rout° that made the hideous roar,
His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?
Alas! what boots it° with uncessant° care

To tend the homely, slighted, shepherd's trade,°
And strictly meditate° the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done, as others use,°
To sport with Amaryllis° in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?°
Fame is the spur that the clear° spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity° of noble mind)
To scorn delights and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon° when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury° with the abhorred shears,
And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise,"
Phœbus° replied, and touched my trembling ears:°
"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistering foil°
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies,
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;°
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."
O fountain Arethuse,° and thou honoured flood,
Smooth-sliding Mincius,° crowned with vocal reeds,
That strain° I heard was of a higher mood.°

But now my oat proceeds,
And listens to the Herald of the Sea,
That came in Neptune's plea.° defense
He asked the waves, and asked the felon° winds,
What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?
And questioned every gust of rugged wings
That blows from off each beaked promontory.
They knew not of his story;
And sage Hippotades° their answer brings,
That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed:
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panope° with all her sisters played.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in the eclipse,° and rigged with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.
Next, Camus,° reverend sire, went footing slow,
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,°
Inwrought with figures dim,° and on the edge
Like to that sanguine flower° inscribed with woe.
"Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest pledge?"°
Last came, and last did go,
The Pilot of the Galilean Lake;°
Two massy keys° he bore of metals twain

(The golden opes, the iron° shuts amain).
He shook his mitred locks,° and stern bespake:°—
"How well could I have spared° for thee, young swain,
Enow of such as, for their bellies' sake,
Creep, and intrude, and climb° into the fold!
Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.°
Blind mouths!° that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the least
That to the faithful herdman's° art belongs!
What recks it them?° What need they? They are sped;°
And, when they list,° their lean and flashy songs°
Grate on their scrannel° pipes of wretched straw;
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But, swoln with wind and the rank° mist they draw,°
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim wolf° with privy paw°
Daily devours apace, and nothing said—
But that two-handed engine° at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."

Return, Alpheus;° the dread voice° is past
That shrunk thy streams;° return, Sicilian Muse,°
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use°
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star° sparely° looks,
Throw hither all your quaint° enamelled° eyes,°
That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers,
And purple° all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe° primrose that forsaken° dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears;
Bid amaranthus° all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureate hearse° where Lycid lies.
For so, to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.°
Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas

Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled;
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,°
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous° world;
Or whether thou, to our moist° vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,°
Where the great Vision° of the guarded mount°
Looks towards Namancos and Bayona's hold.°
Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth:°
And, O ye dolphins,° waft the hapless youth.

Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.
So sinks the day-star° in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks° his beams, and with new-spangled ore°
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him° that walked the waves,
Where, other groves and other streams along,
With nectar° pure his oozy° locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive° nuptial° song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
There entertain him all the Saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,

That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;
Henceforth thou art the Genius° of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth° swain to the oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals grey:
He touched the tender stops° of various quills,°
With eager thought warbling his Doric° lay:
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,°
And now was dropt into the western bay.
At last he rose, and twitched° his mantle blue:
To-morrow to fresh woods,° and pastures new.

ON HIS BLINDNESS°

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days° in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent° which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly° ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands° at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

ON HIS DECEASED WIFE°

Methought° I saw° my late espoused saint
Brought to me like Alcestis° from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Rescued from Death by force, though pale and faint.
Mine, as whom washed from spot of child-bed taint
Purification° in the Old Law did save,
And such as yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind.
Her face was veiled;° yet to my fancied sight
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined
So clear as in no face with more delight.
But, oh! as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.

TO THE NIGHTINGALE

O NIGHTINGALE that on yon bloomy spray
Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still,
Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,
While the jolly Hours lead on propitious May.
Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day,
First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,
Portend success in love. O, if Jove's will
Have linked that amorous power to thy soft lay,
Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate°
Foretell my hopeless doom, in some grove nigh;
As thou from year to year hast sung too late
For my relief, yet hadst no reason why.
Whether the Muse or Love called thee his mate,
Both them I serve, and of their train am I.

ON HIS HAVING ARRIVED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year!
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.°
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth
That I to manhood am arrived so near;
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits° endu'th.
Yet, be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven.
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-Master's eye.

WHEN THE ASSAULT WAS INTENDED TO THE CITY

Captain or Colonel, or Knight in Arms,
Whose chance on these defenceless doors may seize,
If deed of honor did thee ever please,
Guard them, and him within protect from harms.
He can requite thee; for he knows the charms
That call fame on such gentle acts as these,
And he can spread thy name o'er lands and seas,
Whatever clime the sun's bright circle warms.
Lift not thy spear against the Muses' bower:°
The great Emathian conqueror° bid spare
The house of Pindarus,° when temple and tower
Went to the ground; and the repeated air
Of sad Electra's poet° had the power
To save the Athenian walls from ruin bare.

ON THE LORD GENERAL FAIRFAX, AT THE SIEGE OF COLCHESTER

Fairfax, whose name in arms through Europe rings,
Filling each mouth with envy or with praise,
And all her jealous monarchs with amaze,
And rumors loud that daunt remotest kings,
Thy firm unshaken virtue ever brings
Victory home, though new rebellions raise
Their Hydra heads,° and the false North displays
Her broken league° to imp° their serpent wings.
O yet a nobler task awaits thy hand
(For what can war but endless war still breed?)
Till truth and right from violence be freed,
And public faith cleared from the shameful brand
Of public fraud. In vain doth Valor bleed,
While Avarice and Rapine share the land.

TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL, MAY, 1652

ON THE PROPOSALS OF CERTAIN MINISTERS AT THE COMMITTEE FOR PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL

Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud
Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast ploughed,
And on the neck of crowned Fortune proud
Hast reared God's trophies, and his work pursued,
While Darwen stream, with blood of Scots imbrued,
And Dunbar field, resounds thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureate wreath: yet much remains
To conquer still; Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than War: new foes arise,
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains.
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose Gospel is their maw.

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT°

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple Tyrant;° that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.°

TO CYRIACK SKINNER

Cyriack, this three years' day° these eyes, though clear,
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year,
Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied°
In Liberty's defence, my noble task,
Of which all Europe rings from side to side.
This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask
Content, though blind, had I no better guide.

NOTES

At a Solemn Music

Title. "At a Solemn Music" is synonymous with "At a Sacred Concert."

line 2. **Sphere-born.** Milton invented the genealogy. Cf. "Comus," l. 241, where Echo is called "Daughter of the Sphere." Warton quotes Ben Jonson's amplification of the idea:

> "What charming peals are these?—
> They are the Marriage-Rites
> Of two the choicest pair of man's delights,
> Musick and Poesie:
> French air and English verse here wedded lie."

6. **concent:** harmony.

7. **sapphire-coloured throne.** Cf. *Ezekiel*, i. 26 and *Revelation*, v. 2.

18. **noise:** music.

19. **disproportioned sin.** Cf. *Paradise Lost*, XI, ll. 55–57:

> "Sin that first
> Distempered all things, and of incorrupt
> Corrupted."

20. **chime:** harmony.

23. **diapason.** "The octave or interval which includes all the notes of the scale."—Masson.

27. **consort:** society.

On Shakespeare

"On Shakespeare" was published in 1632 in the Second Folio Edition of Shakespeare's works, with the title, *An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatick Poet, W. Shake-*

speare. According to Masson, it was probably first "written on the blank leaf of a copy of the Folio Shakespeare of 1623, the only edition of Shakespeare's collected plays then in existence. The wording of the lines might almost suggest that there was some talk in the year 1630, as there has been so often since, of erecting a great national monument to Shakespeare, distinct from his local monument, in Stratford Church, and that Milton thought the project superfluous. Very probably, however, Milton had been reading the obituary verses to Shakespeare by Ben Jonson and Leonard Digges, prefixed to the First Folio, and only amplified in his own lines an idea already expressed in both those pieces." [1]

It is interesting to compare with Milton's poem the two referred to by Professor Masson. Ben Jonson's is in part as follows:

To the Memory of my Beloved Master, William Shakespeare

"Soul of the age!
The applause, delight, the wonder of our stage!
My Shakespeare, rise! I will not lodge thee by
Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lie
A little further, to make thee a room:
Thou art a monument without a tomb,
And art alive still while thy book doth live
And we have wits to read and praise to give."

Digges has much the same idea:

"Shakespeare, at length thy pious fellows give
The world thy Works; thy Works, by which outlive
Thy tomb thy name must: when that stone is rent
And Time dissolves thy Stratford Monument,
Here we alive shall view thee still. This Book
When brass and marble fade, shall make thee look
Fresh to all ages."

line 4. **star-ypointing:** pointing to the stars. Milton seems to have coined the word. The prefix *y* (Germanic *ge*) belongs correctly to the past passive participle.

8. **livelong.** The word is "lasting" in the Second Folio.—MASSON.

9. **to the shame of slow-endeavouring art.** The

[1] Masson's *Life of Milton*, Vol. I, p. 236.

editors of the First Folio of Shakespeare say of him, "His mind and hand went together: and what he thought he uttered with that easiness that we have scarce received from him a blot on his papers" Milton himself worked slowly and repeatedly revised his first drafts.

11. **unvalued:** invaluable.

12. **Delphic:** oracular, inspired. A reference to the temple of Apollo at Delphi.

14. **Dost make us marble with too much conceiving.** " 'Dost turn *us* into marble by the over-effort of thought to which thou compellest us,'—a very exact description of Shakespeare's effect on his readers."—MASSON. Shakespeare's readers are his monument.

L'ALLEGRO

TITLE. *L'Allegro* is Italian, meaning the cheerful man.

line 1. **Melancholy:** derived from the Greek for "black bile," which was supposed to cause excessive gloom. Here pensiveness. Milton invented the genealogy. "Was it not poetical enough to think of melancholy as the child of Night and the Hell-dog?"—MASSON.

2. **Cerberus:** Pluto's sleepless three-headed dog which guarded the entrance to Hades.

3. **Stygian.** The Styx was one of the four rivers of Hades. The cave of Cerberus was on this river.

5. **uncouth.** The literal meaning is "unknown"; here "wild" or "lonely."

6. **jealous.** Alluding to the watch that fowls keep when they are sitting.—WARBURTON.—**his.** As the antecedent is Darkness, modern English would have *its*. *Its* had been coming into use since 1598, but in all Milton's poetry *its* occurs but three times. Masson's *Life of Milton*, Vol. VI. p. 641.

7. **night-raven.** The raven was a bird of ill-omen. Attention has repeatedly been called to the fact that it is not a night-bird; but see *Much Ado*, II. iii. 84:

"I had as lief have heard the night-raven, come what plague could have come after it."

10. **Cimmerian** In the *Odyssey*, XI. 14, Homer describes the Cimmerians as dwelling in "eternal cloud and darkness."

12. **yclept:** called. Past participle of Anglo-Saxon *cleopian*, to call.—**Euphrosyne.** The three Graces were Euphrosyne, Aglaia, and Thalia. The account of their parentage in lines 14 to 16 was given in the fourth century by Servius in his note on Virgil's *Æneid*, I. 720.

14. **Euphrosyne** or **Mirth** is the daughter of the Goddess of Love and the God of Wine, or of the West Wind and the Dawn. Milton prefers the second.

17. **sager:** more wisely, or an adjective with the noun omitted, with the meaning of "poets with greater wisdom."

22. **roses washed in dew.** Cf. *Taming of the Shrew*, II. i. 174:

> "Morning roses newly wash'd with dew."

24. **buxom.** First meant "pliant," "yielding," and later, as here, "brisk," "lively," "cheerful." Now it means "plump and comely."—**debonair.** "Courteous," "of good appearance." From *de bon aire*.

27. **Quips:** sharp sayings.—**Cranks.** Odd or witty turns of expression.—**wanton.** Sportive, frolicsome.

29. **Hebe:** the goddess who preceded Ganymede as cupbearer of the gods.

33. **trip it.** *It* in this kind of construction is not much used in modern English except colloquially, but notice *lord it*, etc.

34. **fantastic.** Denoting that the dance is improvised according to the fancy.

39. **To live with her.** This passage is perfectly clear if *to come* in line 45 is regarded as coördinate with *to live* in line 39 and *to hear* in line 41. L'Allegro, awakened by the lark, comes to the window of his chamber and bids good-morrow to those on the outside. Then he views the scene in the farmyard.

40. **unreproved:** not deserving reproof; innocent.

44. **dappled:** spotted. Cf. *Much Ado*, V. iii:

> "The gentle day
> Dapples the drowsy east with spots of gray."

45. **in spite of sorrow:** to spite sorrow.

48. **eglantine.** Eglantine is a name for the sweetbrier, which is not twisted. Probably Milton refers here to the common English woodbine or honeysuckle.

57. **not unseen.** "Happy men love witnesses of their joy."—HURD, quoted by Masson and others.

60. **state:** stately advance or march.

62. **dight:** arrayed.

67. **tells his tale:** counts his sheep. But "under the hawthorn" suggests that the meaning of "story-telling" is possible.

69. **Straight.** straightway, immediately. Cf. *Richard III*, I. iii. 355:

> "About your business straight."

And Longfellow, *The Building of the Ship:*

> "Build me straight, O worthy Master!
> Staunch and strong, a goodly vessel."

70. **landskip:** landscape, from Anglo-Saxon, *landscipe*. The same suffix is used in *friendship*.

71. **lawns:** meadows or pastures. **fallows.** *Fallow* has lost entirely its original meaning of "pale-colored." Fallow land is ploughed, but allowed to go one year without a crop.

75. **pied:** mottled with various colors.

78. **Bosomed:** enclosed. Cf. "enbosomed."

80. **cynosure:** an object to which all eyes are turned. The word is Greek for "dog's tail." The last star in the tail of the Lesser Bear is the Pole Star by which Phœnician sailors guided their ships. Greek mariners steered by the Greater Bear. Cf. "Comus," line 341 and note.

83–88. **Corydon, Thyrsis, Phillis, Thestylis** are type names of shepherds and shepherdesses in pastoral poetry.

91. **secure:** untroubled; from *sine cura*.

92. **upland:** inland, rural.

94. **rebecks:** lute-shaped musical instruments, resembling violins, having from one to three strings.

96. **chequered shade.** The sun shining through the

leaves makes the ground beneath look like a checkerboard. Cf. *Titus Andronicus*, II. iii. 14–15:

> "The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind
> And make a chequer'd shadow on the ground."

100. **spicy.** The spice is nutmeg, which is put in ale sweetened and warmed.

102. **Mab.** Cf. Ben Jonson's *The Satyr:*

> "This is Mab, the mistress Fairy,
> That doth nightly rob the dairy,
> She that pinches country wenches."

Cf. also *Romeo and Juliet*, I. iv. 53–95, and the first pages of Shelley's *Queen Mab.* **junkets:** any sweetmeat, but originally cream cheese served on rushes, the Italian name of which is *giunco.* **eat.** Preterit, but riming with *feat.*

103. **She.** a shepherdess tormented by sprites for neglecting her work. Cf. *Merry Wives of Windsor*, V. v. 96–103.

104. **he:** one of the shepherds. **Friar's lantern:** the *ignis fatuus*, called popularly Jack o'Lantern, Will-o'-the-Wisp, etc, the field spirit supposed to mislead people at night—a light seen over marshy places, probably caused by the burning of a highly inflammable gas.

105. **Tells.** *He* may be understood as the subject. This shepherd tells how the drudging goblin, Robin Goodfellow, toiled. Cf. Ben Jonson's *Love Restored:* "I am the honest plain country spirit, and harmless; Robin Goodfellow, he that sweeps the hearth and the house clean, and riddles [passes the embers through a sieve] for the country maids, and does all their other drudgery."

111. **chimney:** fireplace.

113. **crop:** stomach.

117. **Towered cities.** Some editors think that this and what follows describes the evening reading of "L'Allegro." But it may well represent experiences in the city. The poem deals with "a series of typical experiences."

120. **weeds:** clothing; still used in *widow's weeds.* **triumphs:** shows, spectacles. Cf. Bacon's "Of Masques and Triumphs."

121. **store of:** many.

122. **Rain influence.** According to the astrologers, the stars influenced men for good or evil. Here the ladies' eyes are the stars. **judge the prize.** In contests in the writing of poetry and in tournaments ladies awarded the prizes.

124. **her:** the lady who presided at the contest.

125. **Hymen:** the God of Marriage appears in many masques.

126. **saffron:** the customary color of Hymen's robe. Cf. Ben Jonson's *Hymenaei:*

"On the other hand, entered Hymen in a saffron-colour'd robe."

132. **learned sock.** Milton here draws the distinction which is often made between the learning of Ben Jonson, which was correct and profound, and the fancy-free spontaneity of Shakespeare. **sock:** a low-heeled shoe worn by actors in comedies. That, as some have thought, Milton here praises Shakespeare so faintly as to show lack of appreciation, seems far-fetched. Cf. the lines "On Shakespeare (p. 5).

135–150. Note the music of the lines.

136. **Lydian airs.** Lydian was the third of the three kinds or modes of ancient music. The Dorian was stately; the Phrygian lively; the Lydian soft and voluptuous.

138. **soul.** Object of *pierce.*

139. **bout:** a turn in music, a passage.

145. **Orpheus.** Orpheus, the son of Apollo and the Muse Calliope, became, according to the myth, the most famous of musicians. When his wife Eurydice died by the bite of a serpent, he went to the lower world to seek her. Playing his own accompaniment on the lyre, he sang before Pluto his petition for the restoration of his wife. Pluto granted the request on condition that he should not look back at his wife who was to follow him. But when he reached the verge of light, he looked back to make sure that she was following. She had to return to Hades. Because of his grief at the loss of his wife he treated with contempt the Thracian maidens, and by them was torn in pieces. Cf. *Classical Dictionary.*

147. **Elysian**: of Elysium, the abode of the shades of the Blessed.

151–152. **Mirth.** Cf. Christopher Marlowe in "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love":

> "If these delights thy mind may move,
> Then live with me, and be my love."

Read also "The Nymph's Reply," attributed by some to Sir Walter Raleigh.

IL PENSEROSO

TITLE. "Il Penseroso" is good Italian of the seventeenth century, with the meaning of *pensive* or *meditative*. For a contrary, but wrong, opinion see Pattison's *Life of Milton*, p. 22.

line 3. **bested**: the same word as *bestead*, assist, help.

4. **fixed . . . toys**: the mind intent on things of high import will not be attracted by trifles.

6. **fond**: derived from the past participle of Anglo-Saxon *fonnen*, to be foolish; used here in the original meaning. **possess.** Transitive with the object *fancies*.

9. **likest**: an old superlative of *like*. The foolish fancies are most similar to dreams.

10. **pensioners**: retinue. Queen Elizabeth established a guard called pensioners.

12. **Melancholy**: pensiveness.

14. **hit**: meet, agree with. Cf. *Macbeth*, III. vi.

> "My former speeches have but hit your thoughts,
> Which can interpret further."

18. **Memnon**: a king of the Ethiopians, who toward the end of the Trojan War fought for Priam, and was killed by Achilles; he was noted for his beauty. Cf. *Odyssey*, XI. 552. On the beauty of Memnon's sister Milton seems to be the only authority.

19. **starred Ethiop queen**: Cassiopeia, wife of the Ethiopian king, Cepheus, boasted that she or, according to another version of the story, her daughter, Andromeda, was more beautiful than the sea-nymphs. Indignant, they sent a sea-monster to ravage the coast. Directed by an

oracle, Cepheus exposed the daughter to be devoured by the monster; but she was rescued by Perseus. After death Cassiopeia and her daugher became constellations. The sea-nymphs, however, had Cassiopeia placed near the pole, where half the night she is held with her head downward.

23. **Vesta:** the goddess of the hearth. Milton invented the genealogy. It is peculiarly in harmony with the rest of the poem to represent Melancholy as the child of the Goddess of the domestic hearth and Saturn, the introducer of civilization. For the story of Saturn see the *Classical Dictionary*. Read also the first lines of Keats's "Hyperion."

29. **Ida:** a mountain in Crete where Jove overthrew Saturn. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, I. 515.

33. **grain:** originally meant "a small round particle"; then "seed," as a grain of wheat; finally specialized as the name of the *coccus*, an insect from which cochineal dye is made. Hence it means here color; "darkest grain" means dark purple.

35. **stole:** strictly a narrow band fringed at the ends and worn over both shoulders by priests, etc. Now loosely used of any ecclesiastical vestment. **cypress lawn.** "Black linen crepe or gauze, said to have first come from the island of Cyprus."—MASSON.

37. **state:** stately dignity. Cf. "L'Allegro," l. 60.

39. **commercing:** communing.

40. **rapt:** transported.

42. **Forget thyself to marble.** Cf. "On Shakespeare," l. 14 and note.

43. **sad:** serious. **leaden:** the color peculiar to the star Saturn, betokening melancholy. **cast:** gaze.

46. **Spare Fast.** Temperance in diet was a favorite doctrine of Milton's.

51–54. **Cherub contemplation.** Cf. *Ezekiel*, x. To one of the cherubs of Ezekiel's vision Milton gives the name Contemplation. "It was by the serene faculty named Contemplation that one attained the clearest notion of divine things."—MASSON.

52. **yon:** yonder.

55. **Hist** may be considered an imperative; and the lines may be read: "Keep silence unless the nightingale will sing." Some editors call *hist* the past participle with the

meaning *hushed,* and construe *silence* as the object of *bring* in line 51.

56. **Philomel.** Philomela, daughter of King Pandion of Attica, was turned into a nightingale because of her part in the murder of Itys.

57. **plight:** mood.

59. **Cynthia.** Diana was born on Cynthus, a mountain of Delos; hence the name Cynthia. **checks.** The Moon, entranced by the song of the nightingale, checks her team that she may listen. **dragon yoke.** Keightley pointed out that in ancient mythology the car of Ceres, not that of Diana, is drawn by dragons. As proof that Milton had authority for the idea see *Midsummer Night's Dream,* III. ii. 379; and *Cymbeline,* II. ii. 48.

61. **Sweet bird.** As indications of Milton's liking for the nightingale, cf. "Sonnet to the Nightingale"; "Comus," 234 and 566; *Paradise Lost,* IV. 602, 771; VII. 435; *Paradise Regained,* IV. 245.—MASSON.

65. **unseen.** Cf. "L'Allegro," 57 and note. The pensive man loves solitude.

73. **plat:** plot.

74. **curfew.** The curfew-bell, announcing the time for covering fires, usually eight or nine in the evening.

75. **some.** "A distinct intimation, if such were at all necessary, that the whole visual circumstance is ideal,—that the Penseroso of the poem is not actually out walking in any particular locality, but is imagining himself, in reverie, here, there, and everywhere, at the bidding of his mood."—MASSON.

78. **removèd:** remote.

83. **bellman:** Night watchman. **charm.** From *carmen,* "song," originally with the idea of incantation. Cf. Herrick's "The Bellman":

> "From noise of scare-fires rest ye free,
> From murders benedicitie;
> From all mischances that may fright
> Your pleasing slumbers in the night.
>
> Mercie secure ye all, and keep
> The goblin from ye while ye sleep.
> Past one aclock, and almost two;
> My masters all, good day to you."

87. **outwatch the Bear.** As the Bear never sets, this implies studying all night.

88. **thrice-great Hermes.** The Greeks gave to the Egyptian philosopher Thot the name Hermes Trismegistus (thrice great), confusing him with Mercury. Most of the books attributed to him were written by the Neo-Platonists of Alexandria in the fourth century A.D.

88–89. **unsphere . . . Plato:** bring back the spirit of Plato from the unseen world where it now is; that is, study Plato's *Phædo*. Cf. "Arcades," line 63 and note.

93. **And.** After *and* supply *tell*.

94. **fire, air, flood** refers to the mediæval belief that fire, air, water, and earth were the four elements composing the material universe.

98. **sceptred.** Tragedy is concerned mostly with the misfortunes of kings. **pall:** from Latin *palla*, a mantle. Worn by actors in classic tragedies.

99. **Thebes,** etc. Here Milton alludes to the three chief themes of Greek tragedy.

101–102. Some editors find here a reference to Shakespeare only; the lines seem rather to indicate Milton's undervaluation of contemporary drama.

102. **buskined.** The buskin was a high shoe or half-boot worn by the tragic actor. Cf. "L'Allegro," line 132 and note.

104. **Musæus:** a semi-mythical person represented as one of the earliest Greek poets.

105. **Orpheus.** Cf. "L'Allegro," line 145 and note.

109–115. **him that left half-told.** Chaucer, who left the "Squire's Tale" unfinished.

110. **Cambuscan.** This, which seems to be a corrupted form of Genghis Khan, is accented by Chaucer on the last syllable. Cambuscan had by his wife, Elpheta, two sons, Algarsife and Camball, and a daughter, Canace. The King of Arabia and India sent to Cambuscan a steed of brass, which, directed by a pin in its ear, could travel any distance in twenty-four hours, and a sword which could cut through any armor and make a wound that could not be healed unless it were stroked by the back of the sword. Canace received a mirror in which she could read the future, and a ring by virtue of which she could understand

the language of birds and the medicinal value of every plant. The tale ends when Canace has heard the story of a love-sick hawk. It is not known whose wife Canace became. The story was completed by Spenser in *The Faerie Queene*, IV. .2–3.

113. **virtuous:** possessing virtue or power. Cf. *Mark*, v. 30: "And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?"

116–120. This applies closely to Spenser and *The Faerie Queene;* Milton may, however, have had in mind also Ariosto, Tasso, and Boiardo.

122. **civil-suited:** dressed in sober clothing, like that of an ordinary citizen.

124. **Attic boy:** Cephalus, with whom, according to one story, Eos (Aurora) fell in love, and whom she carried away. According to another story, he rejected her advances, but as a result of the affair killed by accident his wife who was watching him while he hunted. Cf. *Classical Dictionary*.

128. **his:** in modern English *its*.

130. **minute-drops.** The drops fall at short, regular intervals.

134. **Sylvan:** the woodland god, Sylvanus, by some identified with Pan.

135. **monumental:** memorial.

141. **garish:** staring.

145. **consort:** possibly in the sense of "society." Cf. "At a Solemn Music," line 27 and note. "Consort" was usual at the time in the sense of "partner."

147–150. These lines are obscure; Professor Masson's paraphrase of them is as clear as any: " 'Let some strange, mysterious dream wave (*i.e.* move to and fro) at his (*i.e.* Sleep's) wings, in airy stream,' etc."

154. **Genius:** guardian spirit.

155. **due:** proper. The cloister is the proper place for the meditative man to walk. Cf. "Lycidas," 7 and "Comus," 12.

156. **studious cloister's pale.** Milton was probably thinking of part of some college building, roofed to keep out the rain, and having open pillared sides.

158. **massy-proof.** The pillars are strong enough to support the massive roof.

159. **storied windows:** windows of stained glass, representing subjects from Scripture history. **dight:** adorned.

170. **spell:** find out the meaning of.

ARCADES

line 4. **mistook.** The use of the past tense for the past participle is common in Elizabethan English.

8. **Fame,** etc. An allusion to the compliments paid to the Countess of Derby by Spenser in his "Teares of the Muses" and in "Colin Clouts Come Home Again."

20. **Latona,** also called Leto, and Jupiter were the parents of Apollo and Diana.

21. **towered Cybele.** Cybele, called by the Greeks Rhea and Ops, was the wife of Saturn (*Cronos*), and the mother of Vesta, Ceres, Juno, Pluto, Neptune, and Jupiter. In works of art she wears a crown, from which towers rise on the forehead; hence "towered."

23. **Juno . . . odds.** Juno could not give her any allowance as a handicap in a contest in beauty. Masson sees here an "implied compliment, that even the handsomest of her daughters could hardly keep up with her."

STAGE DIRECTIONS. **Genius of the Wood.** "It is a fair surmise that the Genius of the Wood was personated by Henry Lawes."—MASSON.

26. **gentle.** Though the actors are disguised, he perceives that they are of the nobility.

28. **Arcady:** Arcadia, a mountainous part of Greece.

30–31. **Alpheus . . . Arethuse.** The river Alpheus, which rises in Arcadia, during part of its course flows underground. This peculiarity gave rise to the myth of the river-god Alpheus and the nymph Arethusa. She, pursued by Alpheus, who had fallen in love with her, was changed by Diana into a fountain, called Arethusa, on the island of Ortygia, in the harbor of Syracuse. Alpheus, transformed into a river, followed her under the sea to Ortygia, and mingled there with the waters of the fountain. Cf. "Lycidas," lines 85 and 132.

33. **silver-buskined Nymphs.** The ladies of the masque

wore buskins. Cf. "Il Penseroso," 102. **Nymphs** is an allusion to Diana and her nymphs, whom Virgil represents as wearing buskins.

34. **free:** noble.

46. **curl:** dress with curls.

51. Note the alliteration in lines 47, 50, and 51. **thwarting:** going crosswise or obliquely; zigzag.

52. **cross dire-looking planet:** Saturn. Cf. "Il Penseroso," 43 and note.

53. **worm:** any small creeping animal.

57. **tasselled:** decorated with tassels.

60. **puissant:** potent. **murmurs:** murmured blessings. Cf. "Comus," 526 and note.

63. **celestial Sirens' harmony.** According to the Ptolemaic astronomical system, which Milton used in his poetry, the earth was the fixed centre of the universe. Enclosing the earth at different distances were ten spheres. The tenth contained all the others, and protected them from Chaos. On each of the nine infolded spheres Milton seats a Siren. The nine Sirens sang in harmony, and keeping time to the music the three Fates, Lachesis, Clotho, and Atropos, turned the spindle of Necessity, "on which the fate of gods and men is wound."

72–73. **none can hear,** etc. "So in Shakespeare's well-known speech of Lorenzo to Jessica on the same music of the spheres (*Merchant of Venice*, V. i):

> " 'But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close us in, we cannot hear it.' "
>
> —MASSON.

81. **state:** chair of state, throne.

97. **Ladon's.** Ladon was a river in Arcady.

98. **Lycæus:** a lofty mountain in Arcadia on which Zeus was worshipped. **Cyllene:** a mountain on the frontier of Arcadia.

100. **Erymanth:** Erymanthus, a river in Arcadia; here the god of the river.

102. **Mænalus:** another Arcadian mountain. Cf. Theocritus, "Idyl I": " 'O Pan, Pan! whether thou art on

the high hills of Lycæus, or rangest mighty Maenalus, haste hither to the Sicilian isle.' "—LANG's Translation.

106. **Syrinx:** an Arcadian nymph, who, when pursued by Pan, was in answer to her prayer changed into a reed, of which Pan made his pipe.

COMUS

In none of the editions of the masque published during the life of Milton is it called *Comus*. It was first published in 1637 by Lawes with this title-page:

"A Maske presented at Ludlow Castle 1634, on Michaelmas Night, before the Right Honorable John, Earl of Bridgewater, Viscount Brackley, Lord President of Wales, and one of His Majesties' Most Honourable Privy Counsell. '*Eheu quid volui misero mihi! floribus Austrum Perditus!*'

"London; Printed for Humphrey Robinson, at the signe of the Three Pidgeons in Paul's Churchyard, 1637."

The Latin motto Professor Masson has translated as follows: "Alas! what have I chosen for my wretched self; thus on my flowers, infatuated that I am, letting in the rude wind?" He thinks that it indicates the fears with which Milton consented to the publication of the masque. But they turned out to be groundless. Milton published it himself in 1645, and again in 1673, with titles similar to that in Lawes's edition. A briefer and more convenient title being necessary, the masque is now named after its principal character.

Masques generally begin with a prologue which expounds the central idea and the occasion—a kind of preliminary exposition. This is supposed to have been the first literary part in the development of the masque.

line 2. **those.** Has the idea of "well known."

3. **insphered.** Cf. "Il Penseroso," line 88, and "Arcades," 63, and notes.

4. **serene.** Where does the accent fall?

7. **pestered:** cumbered, clogged, as a horse hobbled in a pasture.—**pinfold.** An enclosure for stray animals, a pound.

10. **this mortal change.** "This mortal state of life,"—MASSON. Is it not rather an echo of 1 *Corinthians*, XV. 53?

12. **due.** Cf. "Il Penseroso," line 155 and note.

13. **golden key.** Cf. "Lycidas," line 111.

16. **ambrosial weeds:** heavenly garments. Ambrosia was the food of the gods. Cf. "L'Allegro," line 120 and note.

17. **mould:** earth.

18–20. When Jupiter and his brothers distributed by lot among themselves the government of the universe, Neptune obtained the sea; Pluto (called the underground or Stygian Jupiter) the lower regions; and Jupiter the heavens. Hence "high and nether Jove" means Jupiter and Pluto.

23. **unadorned:** equivalent to "otherwise unadorned."

25. **several:** each island to a separate government.

27. **this Isle:** Great Britain.

29. **quarters:** divides among. **blue-haired.** In masques blue is the usual color of the hair of sea-nymphs.

30. **this tract:** Wales.

31. **Peer:** the Earl of Bridgewater. **mickle:** much.

33. **old and haughty.** A compliment to the Welsh. Note the compliments in "Comus"—a masque characteristic.

35. **state:** ceremony of installation, or dignity and high station.

37. **perplexed:** entangled.

38. **horror:** from the Latin *horrere*, to be rough, to bristle.

45. **hall or bower:** in the banqueting hall or in the lady's boudoir.

48. **After the Tuscan mariners transformed.** A Latin construction, equivalent to "After the transformation of the Tuscan mariners." The Tyrrhenian pirates, whose ship Bacchus had hired, were planning to sell him as a slave. He changed the mast and oars into serpents and himself into a lion. The pirates, becoming mad with fright, leaped into the sea and were transformed into dolphins.

49. **Tyrrhene shore:** the shore of the west central part of Italy. **listed:** pleased. Cf. *St. John*, iii 8.

50. **Circe.** Cf. *Odyssey*, X.

56. **a son.** Milton invented this account of the parentage of Comus as well as that of his character.

58. **Comus:** derived from a Greek word for a "band

of revellers," a "jovial troup." Personified as the god of festive mirth, Comus appears first in the later classical mythology.

59. **ripe:** mature. **frolic . . . age:** rejoicing in his strength.

60. **Celtic and Iberian fields:** France and Spain.

65. **orient:** richly bright, with a suggestion of mystery.

66. **drouth of Phœbus:** thirst due to Phœbus, the sun-god.

67. **fond:** foolish. Cf. "Il Penseroso," line 6 and note.

69. **resemblance.** Cf. *Genesis*, i. 26–27.

71. **ounce:** a kind of leopard.

72–77. In Homer's account of Circe her victims retained their intellects unchanged.

79. **adventurous:** containing dangers that afford opportunity for adventures.

83. **Iris' woof.** Iris was goddess of the rainbow. The meaning may be that Comus's clothing was the color of the rainbow. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, XI. 244:

> "Iris had dipped the woof."

87. **knows to:** A Latin construction equivalent to "knows how to." Cf. "Lycidas," lines 10–11.

88. **less faith.** "Not less trustworthy than he is skillful in music."—MASSON.

STAGE DIRECTIONS. Comus with his rabble (rout) forms a rudimentary antimasque.

91. **Aid of this occasion.** Supposed to be a compliment to Henry Lawes, who acted the part.

93–144. Lyrical passages abound in the masques that precede "Comus."

93. **The star:** Hesperus, the evening star, which tells the shepherd when to put his flock in the fold for the night. Cf. *Measure for Measure*, IV. ii. 248:

> "Look, the unfolding star calls up the shepherd."

96–97. **axle . . . stream.** The ancients thought of the Atlantic as a stream flowing around the earth. The waters hissed when the setting sun sank into them.—**steep.** The sea seems to rise steeply from the shore.

98. **slope**: sloped, *i.e.* having passed below the horizon.

99. **dusky**: becoming dark.

100–101. Cf. *Psalms*, xix. 5.

105. **rosy twine**: wreaths of roses.

110. **saws**: wise sayings, maxims. Cf. *As You Like It*, II. vii. 156.

112. **starry quire.** *Quire* is an old spelling of *choir*.

113. **spheres.** This and *starry* in line 112 refer to the idea that the spheres composing the universe made music as they revolved. Cf. "Arcades," line 63 and note.

116. **morrice**: a Moorish dance.

118. **pert**: sprightly (with none of the modern sense of "impertinence"). **dapper**: dainty, spruce.

121. **wakes**: night watches.

129. **Cotytto**: a Thracian divinity, whose rites were celebrated at night in a licentious manner.

131. **called**: addressed in prayer, invoked.

132. **spets**: spits.

135. **Hecate**: the goddess of witchcraft. Cf. *Macbeth*, II. i. and Middleton's *The Witch*, III. iii.

139. **nice**: "foolishly particular about trifles." "Blabbing" in the preceding line shows that "nice" is a sneer. **Indian**: Eastern.

140. **cabined loop-hole**: "the loop-hole of her cabin."

144. **fantastic.** Cf. "L'Allegro," line 34 and note. **round**: a kind of country dance.

STAGE DIRECTION. The Measure denotes any dance with a clearly marked rhythm.

145. **Different pace.** Note the change in metre.

147. **shrouds**: hiding-places.

151. **trains**: allurements, decoys.

153–154. **I hurl**, etc. "Imagine the actor who personated Comus flinging from his hand, or making a gesture of flinging, a magical powder, with the result, by some stage-device, of a flash of coloured light."—MASSON. **spongy air**: Air like a sponge to hold the spells.

155. **blear illusion**: illusions that blur or make dim.

156. **presentments**: representations. Cf. *Hamlet*, III. iv. 53–54:

> "Look here, upon this picture, and on this,
> The counterfeit presentment of two brothers."

157. **habits**: garments. Cf. "riding habits."

161. **glozing**: deceiving.

163. **Wind me**: insinuate myself into his confidence.

165. **virtue**. Cf. "Il Penseroso," line 113 and note.

167. **gear**: business.

168. **fairly**: quietly. Cf. *Much Ado*, V. iv. 72.

174. **loose**: in manners or in morals.

176. **Pan**: the great god of flocks and shepherds.

178. **swilled insolence**: insolence due to swilling, or drinking greedily.

179. **Wassailers**: revelers. *Wassail* is from *waes hael*, be hale, a phrase used in drinking bouts. Cf. *Hamlet*, I. iv. 9.

189. **sad**: sober, serious. **votarist**: one who is devoted or consecrated by a religious vow. **palmer**: "Originally one who had made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and brought back a *palm*-branch as a token."—SKEAT.

190. **Phœbus' wain**: the wagon of the sun-god.

193. **engaged**: entangled.

203. **rife**: prevalent. **perfect**: perfectly distinct.

204. **single**: complete.

210. **well**. In prose the adverb would precede the verb.

212. **strong siding**: taking sides vigorously.

215. **Chastity**. The Biblical trio is Faith, Hope, and Charity. The central idea of "Comus" is the power of chastity.

219. **glistering**: glittering. Cf. *Merchant of Venice*, II. vii. 65.

225. **casts**: construe as coördinate with *does* in line 223.

230. **Echo**. Echo, having deceived Juno, was deprived of all speech except the ability to answer questions. Then Echo fell in love with Narcissus; and, her love being unrequited, she pined away until nothing remained of her but her voice.

231. **airy shell**: the air.

232. **Meander**: a river in Asia Minor, full of windings. **margent**: margin.

237. **Narcissus** fell in love with his own reflection in the water of a fountain. Without eating, he stayed by the fountain till he died. His corpse was changed into the flower that bears his name.

241. **Parley:** Conversation. **Daughter of the Sphere.** Cf. "At a Solemn Music," line 2. Some critics interpret the phrase to mean that Echo is the daughter of the music of the spheres; others that the sphere of line 241 is the "airy shell" of 231.

243. **Give resounding grace:** increase the beauty of the harmonies by echoing them.

247. **vocal:** carrying the voice.

248. **his.** The antecedent is "something holy."

251. **fall:** cadence, a sinking of tone or decrease of volume of sound.

253. **Sirens:** sea-nymphs who lived on an island near Sicily and by their songs lured sailors to destruction. Browne, in the *Inner Temple Masque*, written in 1614, brings them and Comus together. Cf. Homer's *Odyssey*, XII. 67 ff.:

> "They sit amidst a mead,
> And round about it runs a hedge or wall
> Of dead men's bones, their wither'd skins and all
> Hung all along upon it; and these men
> Were such as they had fawn'd into their fen,
> And then their skins hung on their hedge of bones."
> —CHAPMAN'S Translation.

254. **flowery-kirtled:** with clothing adorned with flowers. **Naiades:** nymphs of fresh water.

257. **Elysium.** Cf. "L'Allegro," line 147 and note. **Scylla:** a monster which lived in a cave and had a bark like a dog. (Cf. line 258.) Opposite Scylla lived Charybdis (line 259). Cf. *Odyssey*, XII. 73 ff. Later the two were localized in the Gulf of Messina, Scylla as a rock on the Italian side, and Charybdis as a whirlpool on the Sicilian side.

262. **home-felt:** felt keenly.

268. **Pan.** Cf. line 176. **Sylvan.** Cf. "Il Penseroso," line 134 and note.

271. **ill is lost.** A Latinism, seemingly a translation of *male perditur*.

273. **extreme shift:** last resource.

279–290. These lines imitate in form the dialogue of Greek tragedy.

285. **forestalling**: coming sooner than they expected it.

286. **hit**: guess.

287. **Imports their loss.** Does the loss of them mean much to you?

290. **Hebe**: the goddess of youth. Cf. "L'Allegro," line 29 and note.

291. **what time**: when Cf. "Lycidas," line 28 and note. **laboured**: tired with work.

293. **swinked**: tired. From the Anglo-Saxon *swincan*, to labor.

299. **element**: air or sky.

301. **plighted**: folded. From the Latin, *plicare; plight*, "dangerous condition," is a Teutonic word.

312. **dingle**: a narrow valley.

313. **bosky bourn**: wooded stream.

316. **shroud**: sheltered. Cf. line 147 and note.

317. **low-roosted.** The lark builds its nest on the ground.

325. **courts.** *Courtesy* is derived from *court*.

327. **less warranted.** The idea is iterated in "less secure."

329. **square**: proportion or adjust.

332. **benison**: blessing.

334. **disinherit**: dispossess.

338. **rush-candle**: a candle the wick of which is the pith of a rush. **wicker hole**: window made of platted twigs.

340. **rule.** The light streams straight as a line drawn with a rule.

341. **star of Arcady.** Callisto, an Arcadian nymph, was changed into a bear and later placed by Jupiter in the heavens as the constellation of the Greater Bear. Her son Arcas became the constellation of the Little Bear, in which is the polar star.

342. **Tyrian.** The sailors of Tyre in Phœnicia sailed by the polar star. The Greeks sailed by the Greater Bear. **Cynosure.** Cf. "L'Allegro," line 80 and note.

344. **wattled cotes**: sheepfolds made of interwoven twigs. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, IV. 185 ff.

345. **stops**: small holes in wind instruments such as the flute.

355. **Leans.** The subject is "head."

356. **If.** After "if" supply "she be."

358. **hunger . . . heat:** the hunger of savage beasts or the lust of savage men.

359–360. **over-exquisite . . . evils:** excessively careful or curious to foretell the form of evils.

366. **to seek:** unprepared. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, VIII. 197:

> "Unpractised, unprepared, and still to seek."

367. **unprincipled:** untrained, ignorant of the principles.

376. **seeks to:** resorts to.

380. **to-ruffled:** entirely ruffled. *To* is an intensive particle with the idea of "in pieces," "asunder."

382. **centre:** the centre of the earth.

386. **affects:** likes.

390. **weeds.** Cf. "L'Allegro," line 120 and note.

391. **beads:** rosary.

393. **Hesperian tree.** This tree bore the golden apples presented by Gæa to Hera at her marriage to Zeus. They were guarded by the daughters of Hesperus, aided by a dragon, Ladon. Hercules, as one of his labors, slew the dragon and got possession of the apples. Cf. lines 982–983.

395. **unenchanted:** that cannot be enchanted.

398. **unsunned:** hidden from the light of the sun.

401. **wink on:** seem not to see, close the eyes to.

404. **it recks me not:** I care not.

407. **unowned:** unprotected.

408. **infer:** argue.

413. **squint:** looking askance.

419. **if:** equivalent to "even if."

423. **trace:** traverse. **unharboured:** without places of safety.

426. **bandite:** bandit.

435. **curfew.** Cf. "Il Penseroso," line 74 and note. Ghosts were reputed to wander abroad from curfew to cock-crow.

436. **mine.** "Mines were supposed to be inhabited by various sorts of spirits."—WARTON.

443. **brinded**: brindled, streaked.

447. **Gorgon.** The heads of the three Gorgons were covered with hissing serpents. Medusa, the only mortal one of the three, was killed by Perseus, and her head was placed in the centre of Minerva's shield. It still retained, however, the power of changing to stone whoever looked at it.

455. **lackey**: become servants to.

459. **oft converse**: frequent communion.

468. **Imbodies, and imbrutes**: incorporates with itself the lusts of the flesh and becomes brutish.

473. **it.** The antecedent must be one of the shadows.

476–479. "A compliment to Plato who has just been quoted."—MASSON.

479. **nectared.** Nectar was the drink of the gods.

491. **iron stakes**: swords. Cf. line 487.

494. **Thyrsis.** Cf. "L'Allegro," line 83 and note.

494–497. A compliment to Lawes, who acted the part.

495. **madrigal**: a shepherd's song.

495–512. Note the rimed couplets.

501. **next**: nearest.

502. **toy**: trifle.

506. **To**: with the meaning "compared to."

508. **how chance.** How does it happen?

509. **sadly**: seriously.

515. **sage poets.** Some critics suppose that Milton referred to Homer and Virgil.

517. **Chimeras.** Homer and Virgil sang of one particular Chimera. The forepart of its body was that of a lion; the middle that of a goat; the hind part that of a dragon. It breathed fire. It was killed by Bellerophon mounted on the winged horse Pegasus.

520. **navel**: centre.

526. **murmurs**: murmured incantations.

529. **unmoulding.** The participle modifies poison (line 524) and takes the object *mintage*. Destroying the form of reason stamped on the face.

531. **crofts**: small fields. Cf. Browning's *A Grammarian's Funeral:*

"Sleep, flock and herd! sleep, darkling thorpe and croft."

532. **brow**: overhang.

534. **stabled wolves**: wolves in their dens.

535. **Hecate.** Cf. line 135.

539. **unweeting**: unknowing.

540. **then**: the time that.

542. **besprent**: sprinkled.

547. **meditate**: practise.

548. **ere a close**: before the end of the song.

552. **unusual stop.** An allusion to line 145.

553. **drowsy-flighted**: "drowsily-flying." — MASSON. "Drowsy flighted" is the reading of the Cambridge Ms. But the three earliest editions of *Comus* have "drowsie frighted"—the drowsy horses that had been frightened.

555–562. A compliment to the singing of the lady in the Echo song.

557–560. **Silence . . . wished**: if silence could always be replaced by such a sound, she would willingly cease to be.

558. **took**: charmed.

568. **lawns.** Cf. "L'Allegro," line 71 and note.

573. **prevent**: probably in its original sense of "anticipate."

585. **period**: sentence.

592. **happy trial**: trial which ends happily.

598. **pillared firmament**: an allusion to the ancient belief that the heavens were supported by pillars. Cf. *Paradise Regained*, IV. 455.

602. **for**: as for.

604. **Acheron**: a river in Hades. Meaning here the infernal regions.

605. **Harpies**: unclean creatures, birds with the heads of maidens. Cf. Virgil's *Æneid*, III. 225–228. **Hydras.** Hercules killed the Hydra, which was a monster with nine heads. The plural is probably used here to include water serpents in general.

607. **purchase**: booty, prey.

610. **emprise**: archaic for "enterprise."

611. **stead**: service.

614. **bare**: mere.

617. **relation**: report. **shifts**: contrivances.

619. **shepherd lad.** "Probably a reference to Milton's

bosom friend, the half-Italian Diodati, practising as a physician when 'Comus' was written."—MASSON.

621. **virtuous.** Cf. line 16, and "Il Penseroso," 113 and note.

626. **scrip:** bag.

627. **simples:** medicinal herbs. Originally a single ingredient in a compounded medicine.

635. **clouted shoon:** mended shoes.

636. **Moly.** Hermes gave it to Ulysses to protect him from the drugs and charms of Circe. Cf. *Odyssey*, X. 281–306.

638. **Hæmony.** Milton invented the name. *Hæmonia* was an old name for Thessaly, which classical writers considered the land of magic.

639. **sovran:** most efficacious.

641. **Furies:** the avenging deities.

646. **lime-twigs:** twigs smeared with bird lime.

655. **smoke.** The monster Cacus, a son of Vulcan, vomited smoke. Cf. *Æneid*, VIII. 252–253.

STAGE DIRECTION. **goes about:** tries.

661. **Daphne** was pursued by Apollo, and prayed for aid. She was changed into a laurel tree.

664. **corporal rind:** body.

672. **julep:** derived from a Persian word for rose-water; here a bright medicinal syrup.

673. **his:** its.

675. **Nepenthes:** a pain-dispelling drug. Cf. *Odyssey*, IV. 219 ff.: "Then Helen, daughter of Zeus, . . . cast a drug into the wine whereof they drank, a drug to lull all pain and anger, and bring forgetfulness of every sorrow. Whoso should drink a draft thereof, when it is mingled in the bowl, on that day he would let no tear fall down his cheeks, not though his mother and his father died, not though men slew his brother or dear son with the sword before his face and his own eyes beheld it. Medicines of such virtue and so helpful had the daughter of Zeus, which Polydamna, the wife of Thon, had given her, a woman of Egypt."—BUTCHER and LANG'S Translation.

685. **unexempt condition:** The condition from which no mortal is exempt, *i.e.* "refreshment after toil."

688. **That.** The antecedent is *you* in line 682.

695. **oughly.** So in Milton's text; in many editions now printed *ugly*.

698. **vizored:** disguised by a mask. **forgery:** Deceit.

700. **liquorish:** dainty, enticing the appetite.

707. **budge:** fur, probably referring to that used as linings and edgings of academic gowns. The reference is to teachers in the school of Stoicism. The Stoic philosophers, like the Cynic were indifferent to pleasure and pain.

708. **Cynic tub:** the tub of Diogenes.

711. **unwithdrawing:** liberal.

714. **But all to:** except to. **curious:** dainty, critical (Verity); with the additional idea of "desiring new experiences."

719. **hutched:** shut up as in a box.

721. **pulse:** beans and peas. Cf. *Daniel*, i. 12: "Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink."

722. **frieze:** a coarse woollen cloth, originally from Friesland.

728. **Who.** The antecedent is *Nature's*.

737. **coy:** shy, without any idea of affectation. **cozened:** deceived, cheated.

739–755. **Beauty . . . yet.** Warton quotes *Midsummer Night's Dream*, I. i.:

> "Earthlier happy is the rose distilled
> Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
> Grows, lives, and dies, in single blessedness."

Cf. Shakespeare's Sonnets, especially IV, and VI., and also Herrick's "Gather Ye Rosebuds."

750. **sorry grain:** poor color. Cf. "Il Penseroso," line 33 and note.

751. **sampler:** a piece of embroidery or other needlework preserved to show the skill of the maker. **tease:** comb or card.

760. **bolt:** to sift or separate the flour from the bran; hence here "to make subtle."

791. **fence:** defence.

801. **set off:** made forcible.

803. **wrath of Jove:** an allusion to Jove's war with the Titans.

804. **Erebus:** the darkness of the lower world through which the Shades had to pass on their way to Hades.

805. **Saturn's crew:** the Titans whom Jove overthrew.

808. **canon laws:** regulations. "Canon law" was a technical term for "ecclesiastical law." **foundation:** an endowed institution such as a monastery or college. The line means "Against the regulations of our institution or company."

809. **lees.** According to ancient physicians the four *Cardinal Humours* of the body were blood, choler, phlegm, and melancholy (black bile). These determined by their relative proportions in the body a person's physical and mental qualities. In 1594 Nash, in *Terrors of the Night,* said of melancholy, "It sinketh down to the bottom like the lees of the wine, corrupteth all the blood, and is the cause of lunacy." (Quoted by Todd.)

816. **rod reversed.** The Attendant Spirit plans to undo the spell by reversing the rod and saying backwards the words of Comus.

822. **Melibœus:** a name in pastoral poetry for any shepherd. Milton may here apply it to Geoffrey of Monmouth or to Spenser.

823. **soothest:** truest.

825. **Severn.** Ludlow Castle was near the Severn.

826. **Sabrina.** Geoffrey of Monmouth, Sackville, Drayton, Warner, and Spenser had told the story. Locrine was the son of Brutus, according to tradition the second founder of the British nation. After the death of Brutus, Locrine ruled what is now England. For seven years without his wife's knowledge he kept in his palace a beautiful German princess, Estrildis, and had by her a daughter, Sabrina. At last he divorced Gwendolen, his wife, and acknowledged Estrildis and her daughter. But Gwendolen, having raised an army, defeated and killed Locrine. She then ordered the destruction of Estrildis and Sabrina. There are, of course, discrepancies in the accounts. In Spenser's, Estrildis is slain and Sabrina is thrown into the Severn.

835. **Nereus:** the father of the sea-nymphs.

838. **nectared.** Nectar is poured into the vessels. Cf. line 479 and note. **lavers:** vessels to bathe in. **asphodil:**

"A flower of the lily kind, the perfect mythical variety of which grew in the meadows of Heaven."—MASSON.

845. **helping:** curing. **urchin:** at first meant "hedgehog." It was commonly believed that evil spirits took the form of hedgehogs, and *urchin* assumed the meaning of "sprite" or "imp," as here.

852. **old swain:** the Melibœus of line 822.

863. **amber-dropping.** The amber-colored water of the river was dropping from her hair.

868. **Oceanus:** the god of the water which was supposed to surround the whole earth.

869. **Neptune.** Cf. line 18 and note.

870. **Tethys:** the wife of Oceanus.

871. **Nereus.** Cf. line 835 and note.

872. **Carpathian wizard:** Proteus, the old man of the sea, who is called a wizard because he could prophesy, and because he could assume any shape. **hook:** a shepherd's hook, because he tended the flocks of seals of Neptune.

873. **Triton:** the trumpeter of the marine deities, especially of Neptune.

874. **Glaucus:** a fisherman who, having eaten an herb planted by Saturn, became a sea-god. He yearly, it was believed, visited as a prophet all the islands and coasts of Greece.

875. **Leucothea:** Ino, when pursued by her mad husband, Athamas, threw herself into the sea, carrying in her arms her son Melicertes. The gods made her a sea-goddess with the name Leucothea, and her son a god with the name Palæmon. **lovely hands:** Being the "white goddess," Leucothea might well be supposed to have beautiful hands.

877. **Thetis:** the daughter of Nereus and the mother of Achilles. "Silver-footed," Homer's epithet for Thetis, Milton translated as "tinsel-slippered." "Tinsel," from Latin *scintilla*, "spark," means here "sparkling," "flashing."

879. **Parthenope:** a Siren reputed to have been buried at Naples.

880. **Ligea:** another Siren.

891. **osier:** a species of willow.

893. **azurn:** azure. *Azurn* is found nowhere else.

894. **turkis:** turquoise.

895. **That in the channel strays.** This line may mean that the sheen of the chariot is like the colors that glimmer in the water, or that the chariot strays in the channel.

917. **gums of glutinous heat:** gums made sticky by heat.

921. **Amphitrite's bower:** chamber of Amphitrite, the wife of Neptune.

923. **Anchises' line.** According to legendary history, Anchises was father of Æneas, Æneas of Ascanius, Ascanius of Silvius, Silvius of Brutus, and Brutus of Locrine. Cf. line 827.

929. **tresses:** the foliage on the banks of the river.

934. **lofty head:** the source of the river in the Welsh mountains.

934–935. **crowned . . . round:** encircled round about with many a tower and terrace.

936. **upon.** Groves upon the banks of the river adorn them.

949. **gratulate:** show joy in, welcome.

STAGE DIRECTIONS. **County Dancers.** The second rudimentary antimasque.

963. **Mercury:** the god of wrestling and other athletic games, of music, and, in fact, of everything that required skill and dexterity. Hence Milton credits him with devising the dance.

964. **Dryades:** wood-nymphs. Milton seems to be the first to associate Mercury with them.

972. **assays:** trials, tests.

976–1011. When *Comus* was performed at Ludlow, these lines, somewhat changed, served as the opening speech; and the epilogue began at line 1012.

976–980. Cf. the song of Ariel, *Tempest*, V. i.:

> "Where the bee sucks, there suck I;
> In the cowslip's bell I lie;
> There I couch when owls do cry.
> On the bat's back I do fly
> After summer merrily."

982. **Hesperus.** Cf. line 393 and note.

984. **crisped:** curled.

985. **spruce**: gayly dressed.

986. **Graces.** Cf. "L'Allegro," line 12 and note. **Hours**: The goddesses who personified the seasons of the year; also called the Seasons. They kept the gate of clouds between the earth and the summit of Olympus.

990. **cedarn**: cedar.

991. **Nard and cassia**: aromatic plants.

992. **Iris.** Cf. line 83 and note.

995. **purfled**: edged with embroidery.

996. **Elysian.** Cf. "L'Allegro," line 147 and note.

999. **Adonis**: the youth whom Venus loved and who was killed by a boar.

1000. **wound**: inflicted by the tusks of a boar.

1002. **Assyrian queen**: Venus. She is called "Assyrian" here "because her worship was of Eastern origin. She appears to have been originally identical with Astarte, called by the Hebrews Ashtoreth."—*Classical Dictionary.*

1005. **Psyche.** The myth of Cupid and Psyche (the soul) first appeared in the second century A.D. Cupid fell in love with her, but she incurred the enmity of his mother Venus, who imposed on her impossible tasks, the wandering labors of line 1006. Aided by Cupid, she overcame the opposition of Venus, became immortal, and was united to him forever.

1010–1011. **Two blissful twins.** This genealogy of Youth and Joy is Milton's invention.

1015. **bowed welkin**: arched sky.

1021. **sphery chime.** Another allusion to the music of the spheres. Cf. "Arcades," 63 and note.

1022–1023. "On a certain day, nearly five years after *Comus* was written (June 10, 1639), Milton, passing through Geneva, on his return to England from his Italian journey, was asked to write something in an album kept by the family of a certain Italian, Cerdogni, living there, in which already there were the signatures of many distinguished persons of the time. Complying, he wrote these last two lines of his *Comus*, adding the Latin verse, '*Coelum non animum muto dum trans mare curro,*' and his signature, 'Joannes Miltonius, Anglus.' It was as if he said, 'Wherever I go, the sentiment of the last two lines of my *Comus* is always my fixed belief.' "—MASSON.

LYCIDAS

TITLE. The name Lycidas occurs in the pastorals of Theocritus and Virgil. In Milton's poem it is used of Edward King.

SUB-TITLE. This was added to the poem when it was published in 1645, probably for two reasons: first, the general public needed to be told who King was and what circumstances led to the writing of the poem; secondly, the time was propitious for calling attention to the attack on the Church. **Monody:** a mourning poem sung by a single mourner. **by occasion:** incidentally.

line 1. **Once more.** Since 1634, when he completed "Comus," Milton had written no poetry, but had been preparing himself for the writing of a great poem.

1–2. **Laurels, myrtles,** and **ivy** were used to crown all poets—not merely pastoral poets. **never sere:** evergreen.

2. **brown:** dark, husky. Cf. "Il Penseroso," line 134 and note.

3–5 **berries . . . year.** Milton felt that he was still unprepared to write. In his immaturity he was likely to scatter the leaves rather than win himself a crown.

6. **dear.** Used commonly in Elizabethan English of anything, whether pleasant or unpleasant, that comes home to one closely.

7. **compels.** As the two subjects name only one idea, the singular verb is correct.

9. **peer:** equal.

10–11. **knew . . . to:** a Latinism, equivalent in modern English to "knew how." King had written Latin verses.

13. **welter:** tumble about. **parching.** King was drowned in August.

14. **meed:** recompense, tribute. **melodious tear:** elegy.

15. **Sisters . . . well.** The Nine Muses were born in Pieria at the foot of Mt. Olympus, on which the gods lived. Hence the "well" may be the Pierian spring. But they also haunted the fountains of Aganippe and Hippocrene on Mt. Helicon, and the Castalian spring on Mt. Parnassus.

16. **seat of Jove.** Jove had an altar at Aganippe. Cf. "Il Penseroso," lines 47–48.

18. **coy:** bashful.

19. **Muse:** poet.

19–22. Here Milton expresses the wish that after his death some poet will write memorial verses in his honor.

20. **lucky:** wishing me good fortune.

23–36. "Here the language of the pastoral is used, as was the rule in all such poems, to veil and at the same time express real facts. Milton and King had been fellow-students at Christ's College, Cambridge, visiting each other's rooms, taking walks together, performing academic exercises in common, exchanging literary confidences; all which, translated into the language of the pastoral, makes them fellow-shepherds, who had driven their flock a-field together in the morning, and fed it all day by the same shades and rills, not without mutual ditties on their oaten flutes, when sometimes other shepherds, or even Fauns and Satyrs, would be listening."—MASSON.

23. **hill:** Cambridge.

27–28. **heard . . . grey-fly:** heard the grey-fly when she, etc. The grey-fly is probably the trumpet-fly, which makes a humming noise at noon, the *sultry* time of day.

29. **Battening:** fattening. It is usually intransitive.

30. **star:** Hesperus, the evening star. Critics have objected here on the ground that the evening star does not rise, but simply becomes visible in the gathering darkness. It seems clear, however, that Milton had in mind the evening star, for in the original manuscript the line is "Oft till the even-star bright."

34. **Satyrs.** In Greek mythology the frolicsome deities of the woods and fields, half men, half goats. **Fauns:** Roman deities similar to the Satyrs.

36. **Damœtas:** a name used by the pastoral poets, Theocritus, Virgil, and Spenser. It may refer to some officer of the University.

40. **gadding:** straggling.

45. **canker:** canker-worm, an insect that feeds on flowers, especially the rose.

46. **taint-worm:** some kind of poisonous parasite.

Verity quotes from Sir Thomas Browne's *Vulgar Errors* (Book III, Chapter XVII, Section ii): "There is found in the summer a kind of spider, called a tainct, of a red colour, and so little of body that ten of the largest will hardly outweigh a grain; this by the country people is accounted a deadly poison unto cows and horses; who, if they suddenlie die, and swell thereon, ascribe their death thereto, and will commonly say, they have licked a tainct."

46. **weanling:** recently weaned.

48. **white-thorn:** the hawthorn. Cf. "L'Allegro," line 68.

50–55. Cf. Theocritus, "Idyl I," lines 66–69: "Ye Muses . . . Where were ye when Daphnis was languishing; ye Nymphs, where were ye? By Peneus's beautiful dells, or by dells of Pindus? for surely ye dwelt not by the great stream of the river Anapus, nor on the watch-tower of Etna, nor by the sacred water of Acis."—LANG'S Translation.

Cf. also Virgil, *Eclogue* X. 9–12, and Spenser, *Astrophel*, stanza XXII.

52. **the steep:** some mountain on the Welsh coast near which King was drowned, possibly Kerig-y-Druidion, where there is supposed to be a burial-place of the Druids.

53. **Druids:** the ministers of religion among the Celts of ancient Britain and Gaul. Milton calls them bards because they were also the poets of the Celts.

54. **Mona:** the Roman name for the island of Anglesey, in the oak groves of which the Druids performed their rites.

55. **Deva:** the Dee, which flows between England and Wales into the Irish Sea. **wizard.** The Dee was supposed to be haunted by wizards; according to Spenser, Merlin often visited it. Another legend is that by changing its course it foretold either good or ill to England and Wales.

56. **fondly:** foolishly. Cf. "Il Penseroso," line 6 and note.

58. **Orpheus.** Cf. "L'Allegro," 145 and note.

59. **Muse.** Calliope, the muse of epic poetry, was the mother of Orpheus. **enchanting.** Orpheus worked by the enchantment of music.

61. **rout**: the unruly band of Thracian women who tore Orpheus in pieces and threw his head into the Hebrus. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, VII. 33–35:

> "The race
> Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard
> In Rhodope."

64–84. Note the long digression in which Milton tries to decide whether after all the incessant care of the poet is worth while.

64. **what boots it**: what advantage is it? **uncessant**: incessant.

65. **shepherd's trade**: the writing of poetry.

66. **meditate . . . Muse**: compose. **thankless**: not rewarded by thanks, profitless.

67. **use**: are in the habit of doing.

67–69. **others . . . hair.** These lines seem to contrast a life of ease and pleasure with the laborious life of the poet described in lines 64–66. Some critics, however, think them a contemptuous reference to the love poetry of the Cavalier lyrists, Carew, Herrick, etc.

68–69. **Amaryllis** and **Neæra** are names of shepherdesses in pastoral poetry.

70. **clear**: noble, pure.

71. **Last infirmity**: the last infirmity to be abandoned.

73. **guerdon**: reward.

75. **blind Fury**: probably Atropos, one of the three Fates. Clotho spun the thread of life; Lachesis decided the length of each life; and Atropos cut the thread. In classical mythology the Fates and Furies are distinct. The idea seems to be that only a Fury could be so insane as to cut King's thread of life.

77. **Phœbus**: an epithet of Apollo, the Greek god of poetry. **touched my trembling ears.** Professor Masson thinks that this is an allusion to "the popular superstition that the tingling of a person's ears is a sign that people are talking about him. What Milton had been saying about poetic fame might be understood, he was, as applicable to himself." But in Virgil's *Eclogue* VII, touching the ear is a method of recalling a subject to one's memory. "When I was venturing to sing of kings and battles, the Cynthian

god touched my ear and appealed to my memory." Milton may mean to say that Apollo called his attention to something he had forgotten about fame.

79. **glistering foil**: glistening metal leaf, hence a display.

79–82. Fame does not depend on a display of accomplishments or on being the talk of the town. It consists rather in the approbation of God; to attain fame one must live ever in his "great Task-Master's eye."

82. **Jove**: God. Used here because all the other names in the passage are classical.

85–86. Cf. "Arcades," line 30 and note.

After the digression on fame the poet returns to the pastoral proper. He announces the return by calling on **Arethusa** as representing the pastoral poets of Sicily—Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus—and on the **Mincius**, a river in Italy near which Virgil was born, as representing Latin pastoral poems.

87. **strain**: the words of Apollo in lines 76–84. **mood**: style or tone of music.

89–90. **Herald . . . plea.** Triton "comes in behalf of Neptune to inquire what had caused the drowning of Lycidas."—MASSON. Or he may have come to defend Neptune against the charge of having drowned him. Cf. "Comus," line 873 and note.

91. **felon.** Because they are assumed to have caused the death of Lycidas.

96. **Hippotades**: Æolus, the son of Hippotes. Zeus appointed him god of the winds, which he kept enclosed in a mountain.

99. **Panope**: one of the fifty daughters of Nereus. Cf. "Comus," line 835 and note.

101. **eclipse.** Eclipses were proverbially omens of disaster. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, I. 596–599; and *Macbeth*, IV. i. 28.

103. **Camus**: the guardian spirit of the river Cam and of Cambridge University.

104. **hairy.** The allusion is to the river weeds floating on the water.

104. **sedge**: a coarse grass which grows on the banks of streams, a traditional adornment of river-deities.

105. **figures dim:** the indistinct markings on the dried sedge, or devices symbolizing the history of the University.

106. **sanguine flower.** Apollo killed by accident a Spartan prince named Hyacinthus, from whose blood grew a flower on the leaves of which the exclamation of woe, *Ai, Ai,* alas, alas! seemed to be represented.

107. **pledge:** child.

109. **The Pilot of the Galilean Lake:** St. Peter, who is introduced here as the founder of the Church. King had intended to become a clergyman.

110. **Keys.** Cf. *Matthew,* xvi. 19:

"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

111. **golden . . . iron.** A tradition had gained vogue in the church that Peter bore two keys. Milton invented the idea that one key is of gold, the other of iron, and that one opens, the other shuts. **amain:** with force.

112. **mitred:** furnished with a mitre, the head-dress of a bishop. **bespake:** spoke.

113. **spared.** Through the mouth of St. Peter, Milton denounces the corrupt clergy.

115. **Creep, and intrude, and climb.** "First those who 'creep' into the fold, who do not care for office, nor name, but for secret influence, and do all things occultly and cunningly, consenting to any servility of office or conduct, so only that they may intimately discern, and unawares direct, the minds of men. Then those who 'intrude' (thrust, that is) themselves into the fold, who, by natural insolence of heart, and stout eloquence of tongue, fearlessly perseverant self-assertion, obtain hearing and authority with the common crowd. Lastly, those who 'climb,' who, by labor and learning both stout and sound, but selfishly asserted in the cause of their own ambition, gain high dignities and authorities, and become 'lords over the heritage,' though not 'ensamples to the flock.' "—RUSKIN's *Sesame and Lilies,* section 21.

118. **worthy . . . guest.** Cf. *Matthew,* xxii. 8.

119. **Blind mouths.** "Those two monosyllables express the precisely accurate contraries of right character in the two great offices of the Church,—those of the bishop and pastor. A 'bishop' means 'a person who sees.' A 'pastor'

means 'a person who feeds.' The most unbishoply character a man can have is, therefore, to be blind. The most unpastoral is, instead of feeding, to want to be fed,—to be a mouth. Take the two reverses together, and you have 'blind mouths.' "—*Sesame and Lilies*, section 22.

"Our clergy are rather to be called Sheep than Shepherds; they are fed rather than the pastors; all, in general, is fat about them, even the intellects not excepted."—MILTON'S *Defensio Secunda*, Masson's Translation.

121. **herdman.** The terms peculiar to a shepherd's occupation are very appropriate throughout this passage because we are accustomed to think of clergymen as shepherds.

122. **What recks it them.** What care is it of theirs?—**sped.** Provided for.

123. **list:** please. **songs:** sermons.

124. **scrannel:** thin, lean, slight.

126. **rank:** noxious, pestilential. **draw:** breathe in. The unworthy pastors taught false doctrine, or what seemed false to a Puritan like Milton.

128. **grim wolf:** the Church of Rome. **privy paw.** In 1636 and 1637 English Protestants were much alarmed over the secret proselytizing carried on by the Roman Catholic party. Cf. Masson's *Life of Milton*, Vol. I., pp. 685–686.

130. **two-handed engine.** An engine was something cunningly or ingeniously devised; hence, any instrument. Explanations of the reference are numerous. Professor Masson says that Milton was thinking of the two houses of Parliament; other critics mention the two-edged sword of *Revelation*, i. 16, the axe laid unto the root of the tree of *Matthew* iii. 10, and *Luke*, iii. 9, and the Sword of Justice. John Richard Green in his *History of the English People*, Vol. III., p. 184, calls it a "threat of the axe." Milton evidently believed that an efficient instrument of reform was at hand.

132. **Alpheus.** Cf. "Arcades," lines 30–31 and note. By calling on Alpheus Milton announces his return to pastoral poetry proper after his second long digression. After the first digression he invoked Arethusa, now her lover. **dread voice.** That of St. Peter.

133. **shrunk thy streams:** interrupted the pastoral verse. **Sicilian Muse.** Cf. "Arcades," line 30, and "Lycidas," line 85 and notes.

136. **use:** dwell, stay.

138. **swart star:** the Dog-star, Sirius, which during July and August rises at the same time as the sun. Hence seems to have arisen the belief that this star is responsible for the hot weather of those months, and makes people swart, dark. Cf. *dog-days*. **sparely:** seldom.

139. **quaint:** pretty or fanciful. **enamelled:** glossy and marked by different colors. **eyes:** flowers.

141. **purple.** An imperative coödinate with *throw*, line 139.

142–150. Cf. *Winter's Tale*, IV, iv. 116–127.

142. **rathe:** early. **forsaken.** Milton wrote first "unwedded," and some critics thus interpret "forsaken." But the change in the wording seems intended to change the meaning to "left alone."

149. **amaranthus.** This word comes from the Greek for "never-fading."

151. **laureate hearse.** "Hearse," derived from Latin *hirpex*, a harrow, has been used as a name of almost everything connected with a funeral. Here it probably means the wooden support on which the coffin rests. To this support copies of memorial verses were often fastened.

153. **dally with false surmise.** Fancy that the body of Lycidas is covered with flowers and elegies when it is really tossed about in the ocean.

156. **Hebrides:** islands west of Scotland.

158. **monstrous:** of monsters.

159. **moist:** tearful.

160. **by the fable of Bellerus old:** Land's End, the southwestern extremity of England, the abode of the fabled Bellerus.

161. **great Vision:** a vision of St. Michael, the Archangel. **guarded mount:** St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall, on a crag of which the Archangel was said sometimes to appear and which he therefore "guarded."

162. **Namancos and Bayona's hold:** places in Spain toward which, according to the fable, St. Michael looked.

163. "In making the Archangel Michael, the guardian

and defender of the Church of Christ, look toward Namancos and Bayona's hold, *i.e.* toward Spain, the great stronghold, at the time, of Papacy, and which, in the reign of Elizabeth, had threatened England with invasion and with the imposition of the Roman Catholic religion, the poet would evidently imply the Archbishop's watchfulness over the church against foreign foes. But the danger is not from *without* (this I take to be the idea shadowed forth), the danger is not from without—it lies *within* the Church. Milton, or rather 'Milton transformed in his imagination, for the time, into a poetic shepherd,' therefore says: 'Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth.' "—CORSON'S *Introduction to the Works of John Milton*, pp. 172–173. —**ruth**: pity.

164. **dolphins.** Arion, a celebrated player on the lyre, carrying with him great wealth, embarked on a ship sailing to Corinth. When he found that the sailors were planning to murder him for his wealth, he asked permission to play once more on his lyre. Having played, he threw himself into the sea. His music had attracted to the ship many dolphins, on the back of one of which he reached Corinth in safety.

168. **day-star**: the sun.

170. **tricks**: dresses anew, makes trim. **ore**: bright-colored metal. "Ore" often means "gold" in Elizabethan writers, probably because it was confused with *aurum*, which is similar in sound.

173. **Him.** Cf. *Matthew*, xiv. 25–31.

175. **nectar.** Cf. "Comus," line 479 and note. **oozy**: wet with sea-water.

176. **unexpressive**: inexpressible. **nuptial.** Cf. *Revelation*, xix. 7–9.

183. **Genius**: Guardian spirit. In this passage, as in others in "Lycidas," Milton blends Pagan and Christian beliefs.

186–193. The lament closes with line 185. In the closing stanza Milton speaks of himself.

186. **uncouth.** The original meaning is "unknown"; and that may be the meaning here, as in 1637 Milton was an unknown writer.

188. **stops.** Cf. "Comus," line 345 and note. **quills:** reeds.

189. **Doric.** Theocritus and the other Sicilian pastoral poets used the Doric dialect.

190. **stretched hills.** The setting of the sun had caused their shadows to lengthen.

192. **twitched:** gathered tightly around him.

193. **woods.** This line is often misquoted.

ON HIS BLINDNESS (WRITTEN IN 1655)

line 2: **Ere half my days.** Milton's blindness became complete in 1652, while he was writing the "Second Defense of the English People." He was thus forty-four years old.

3. **talent.** Cf. *Matthew*, XXV. 14–30.

8. **fondly:** foolishly.

12. **thousands.** That is, of heavenly messengers.

ON HIS DECEASED WIFE (WRITTEN PROBABLY IN 1658)

In November, 1656, four years after the death of his first wife, Milton married Katherine Woodcock. In the following October a daughter was born to them. Four months later Mrs. Milton died, and one month after her death occurred that of the child. In the words of Professor Masson, "She had been to him, during the short fifteen months of their union, all that he had thought saintlike and womanly, very sympathetic with himself, and maintaining such peace and order in his household as had not been there till she entered it."

line 1. **Methought I saw.** It is probable that Milton never saw his second wife.

2. **Alcestis.** When, Admetus, King of Thessaly, was mortally sick, Apollo obtained from the Fates a promise to spare him if any one could be found to die in his place. His wife, Alcestis, consented, and was rescued from death by Hercules. The story is told in the *Alcestis* of Euripides. Cf. Browning's "Balaustion."

6. **Purification.** Cf. *Leviticus*, xii.

10. **Her face was veiled.** The face of Alcestis was veiled when she returned to Admetus.

TO THE NIGHTINGALE

This sonnet is probably one of the earlier ones composed by Milton.

The ancients had many stories of birds and of the attributes they were supposed to personify. The nightingale has always been the bird of lovers. In the English countryside the cuckoo was properly accredited with bringing bad luck to lovers especially if heard before the nightingale.

line 9. **rude bird of hate.** Other poets have not chosen to think the cuckoo so ill-fated.

ON HIS HAVING ARRIVED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE

This sonnet is an answer to a reproach from a friend who thought Milton was devoting too long a time to a life of study. Nowadays twenty-three does not seem to us a very "late" age at which to start one's career.

line 4. **no bud or blossom shew'th.** A reference to his not yet having achieved anything in life.

8. **timely-happy spirits.** Note the use of the compound adjective.

WHEN THE ASSAULT WAS INTENDED TO THE CITY

In the Civil War, Milton's talents were employed on the side of the Roundheads. Early in the war the Cavaliers approached London, and it was quite natural for Milton to think that he, who had used his talents so assiduously against them, would be the object of their special attention. The sonnet was probably written with the memory of the fears he experienced vividly in mind.

line 9. **the Muses' bower.** What is meant here?

10. **Emathian conqueror.** Alexander the Great, so-called from a district in Macedonia.

11. **Pindarus.** The reference is to a story told of Alexander. Although the rest of Thebes was to be laid waste, the conqueror gave orders that the house of Pindarus the poet was to be spared.

13. **the repeated air of sad Electra's poet.** When

the Greek allies made war on Athens, a Phocian among the troops sang the air of the chorus from the *Electra* of Euripides. The captains decided that it would be a sin to destroy a city which had contributed so much to the culture of Greece, so Athens was spared.

On the Lord General Fairfax, at the Siege of Colchester

Colchester was taken by the parliamentary army in 1648, and its capture was one of the important victories of the War.

line 7. **Their Hydra heads.** The Hydra, in Greek mythology, was a creature almost impossible to kill, for, as soon as one head was cut off, others grew in its place.

7–8. **the false North displays her broken league.** The Scotch and the English had entered into a league and had drawn up a covenant, which each accused the other of breaking.

8. **imp.** to add feathers in order to strengthen the broken wing.

To the Lord General Cromwell, May, 1652

This poem in honor of the Lord Protector, whom Milton undoubtedly admired, praises him by citing the scenes of his victories, Darwen stream (1648), Dunbar (1650), and Worcester (1651).

lines 10–11. **Peace hath her victories**
No less renowned than War:

These two lines are often quoted. What do they mean?

On the Late Massacre in Piedmont

During the time of the Protectorate an attempt was made to drive out Protestantism among the Waldensians, people who lived in the Waldenses, valleys in the Piedmont. Both the French and Piedmontese governments took part in

this attempt. Cromwell's protest resulted in stopping the persecution.

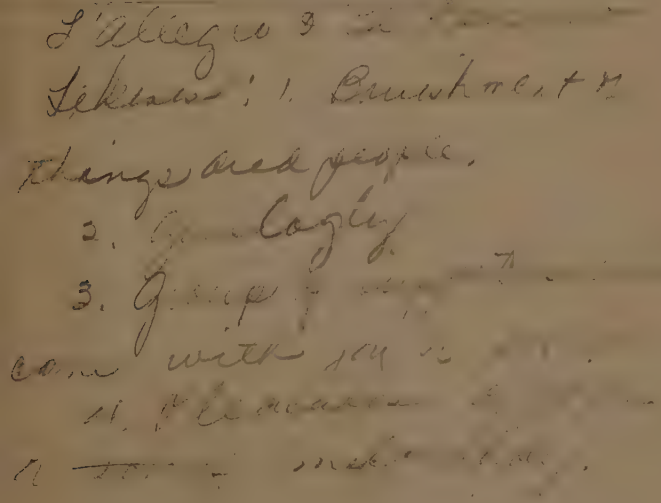
line 12. **The triple Tyrant.** The pope, who wears a triple crown, or tiara.

14. **Babylonian woe.** A favorite comparison among the Puritans of the period. To them Babylon and the Church of Rome were synonymous.

To Cyriack Skinner

line 1. **this three years' day.** This marks the composition of the poem as 1655. Milton became blind in 1652.

10ff. Milton blames his heavy work as Cromwell's secretary of foreign affairs for his blindness.



Euphrosyne — Joy
Aurora } Milton's
Zephyr } Pregerene

Bacchus
Venus

Il Penseroso - Mer.

Vesta
Saturn

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